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THE TRIAL FOR MURDER

BY

CHARLES DICKENS

I HAVE always noticed a prevalent want of courage, even among persons of superior intelligence and culture, as to imparting their own psychological experiences when those have been of a strange sort. Almost all men are afraid that what they could relate in such wise would find no parallel or response in a listener's internal life, and might be suspected or laughed at. A truthful traveller, who should have seen some extraordinary creature in the likeness of a sea-serpent, would have no fear of mentioning it; but the same traveller, having had some singular presentiment, impulse, vagary of thought, vision (so-called), dream or other remarkable mental impression, would hesitate considerably before he would own to it. To this reticence I attribute much of the obscurity in which such subjects are involved. We do not habitually communicate our experiences of these subjective things as we do our experiences of objective creation. The consequence is, that the general stock of experience in this regard appears exceptional, and really is so, in respect of being miserably imperfect.

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In what I am going to relate I have no intention of setting up, opposing, or supporting any theory whatever. I know the history of the bookseller of Berlin, I have studied the case of the wife of a late astronomer royal as related by Sir David Brewster, and I have followed the minutest details of a much more remarkable case of spectral illusion occurring within my private circle of friends. It may be necessary to state as to this last, that the sufferer (a lady) was in no degree, however distant, related to me. A mistaken assumption on that head might suggest an explanation of a part of my own case—but only a part—which would be wholly without foundation. It cannot be referred to my inheritance of any developed peculiarity, nor had I ever before any at all similar experience, nor have I ever had any at all similar experience since.

It does not signify how many years ago, or how few, a certain murder was committed in England, which attracted great attention. We hear more than enough of murderers as they rise in succession to their atrocious eminence, and I would bury the memory of this particular brute, if I could, as his body was buried, in Newgate Jail. I purposely abstain from giving any direct clew to the criminal's individuality.

When the murder was first discovered, no suspicion fell—or I ought rather to say, for I cannot be too precise in my facts, it was nowhere publicly hinted that any suspicion fell—on the

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man who was afterward brought to trial. As no reference was at that time made to him in the newspapers, it is obviously impossible that any description of him can at that time have been given in the newspapers. It is essential that this fact be remembered.

Unfolding at breakfast my morning paper, containing the account of that first discovery, I found it to be deeply interesting, and I read it with close attention. I read it twice, if not three times. The discovery had been made in a bedroom, and, when I laid down the paper, I was aware of a flash—rush—flow—I do not know what to call it—no word I can find is satisfactorily descriptive—in which I seemed to see that bedroom passing through my room, like a picture impossibly painted on a running river. Though almost instantaneous in its passing, it was perfectly clear, so clear that I distinctly, and with a sense of relief, observed the absence of the dead body from the bed.

It was in no romantic place that I had this curious sensation, but in chambers in Piccadilly, very near to the corner of St. James's Street. It was entirely new to me. I was in my easy-chair at the moment, and the sensation was accompanied with a peculiar shiver which started the chair from its position. (But it is to be noted that the chair ran easily on castors.) I went to one of the windows (there are two in the room, and the room is on the second floor) to refresh my eyes with the moving

Masterpieces of Fiction

objects down in Piccadilly. It was a bright autumn morning, and the street was sparkling and cheerful. The wind was high. As I looked out, it brought down from the Park a quantity of fallen leaves, which a gust took, and whirled into a spiral pillar. As the pillar fell and the leaves dispersed I saw two men on the opposite side of the way, going from west to east. They were one behind the other. The foremost man often looked back over his shoulder. The second man followed him, at a distance of some thirty paces, with his right hand menacingly raised. First, the singularity and steadiness of this threatening gesture in so public a thoroughfare attracted my attention; and next, the more remarkable circumstance that nobody heeded it. Both men threaded their way among the other passengers with a smoothness hardly consistent even with the action of walking on a pavement; and no single creature, that I could see, gave them place, touched them, or looked after them. In passing before my windows, they both stared up at me. I saw their two faces very distinctly, and I knew that I could recognize them anywhere. Not that I had consciously noticed anything very remarkable in either face, except that the man who went first had an unusually lowering appearance, and that the face of the man who followed him was of the colour of impure wax.

I am a bachelor, and my valet and his wife constitute my whole establishment. My occupa-

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tion is in a certain branch bank, and I wish that my duties as head of a department were as light as they are popularly supposed to be. They kept me in town that autumn, when I stood in need of change. I was not ill, but I was not well. My reader is to make the most that can be reasonably made of my feeling jaded, having a depressing sense upon me of a monotonous life, and being "slightly dyspeptic." I am assured by my renowned doctor that my real state of health at that time justifies no stronger description, and I quote his own from his written answer to my request for it.

As the circumstances of the murder, gradually unravelling, took stronger and stronger possession of the public mind, I kept them away from mine, by knowing as little about them as was possible in the midst of the universal excitement. But I knew that a verdict of wilful murder had been found against the suspected murderer, and that he had been committed to Newgate for trial. I also knew that his trial had been postponed over one sessions of the Central Criminal Court, on the ground of general prejudice and want of time for the preparation of the defence. I may further have known, but I believe I did not, when, or about when, the sessions to which his trial stood postponed would come on.

My sitting-room, bedroom, and dressing-room are all on one floor. With the last there is no communication but through the bedroom. True, there is a door in it, once communicating

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with the staircase, but a part of the fitting of my bath has been—and had then been for some years—fixed across it. At the same period, and as a part of the same arrangement, the door had been nailed up and canvased over.

I was standing in my bedroom late one night giving some directions to my servant before he went to bed. My face was toward the only available door of communication with the dressing-room, and it was closed. My servant's back was toward that door. While I was speaking to him, I saw it open, and a man look in, who very earnestly and mysteriously beckoned to me. That man was the man who had gone second of the two along Piccadilly, and whose face was of the colour of impure wax.

The figure, having beckoned, drew back, and closed the door. With no longer pause than was made by my crossing the bedroom, I opened the dressing-room door, and looked in. I had a lighted candle already in my hand. I felt no inward expectation of seeing the figure in the dressing-room, and I did not see it there.

Conscious that my servant stood amazed, I turned round to him, and said, "Derrick, could you believe that in my cool senses I fancied I saw a——" As I there laid my hand upon his breast, with a sudden start he trembled violently, and said, "Oh, Lord, yes, sir! A dead man beckoning!"

Now I do not believe that this John Derrick,

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my trusty and attached servant for more than twenty years, had any impression whatever of having seen any such figure, until I touched him. The change in him was so startling, when I touched him, that I fully believe he derived his impression in some occult manner from me at that instant.

I bade John Derrick bring some brandy, and I gave him a dram, and was glad to take one myself. Of what had preceded that night's phenomenon I told him not a single word. Reflecting on it, I was absolutely certain that I had never seen that face before, except on the one occasion in Piccadilly. Comparing its expression when beckoning at the door with its expression when it had stared up at me as I stood at my window, I came to the conclusion that on the first occasion it had sought to fasten itself upon my memory, and that on the second occasion it had made sure of being immediately remembered.

I was not very comfortable that night, though I felt a certainty, difficult to explain, that the figure would not return. At daylight I fell into a heavy sleep, from which I was awakened by John Derrick's coming to my bedside with a paper in his hand.

This paper, it appeared, had been the subject of an altercation at the door between its bearer and my servant. It was a summons to me to serve upon a jury at the forthcoming sessions of the central criminal court at the Old Bailey.

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I had never before been summoned on such a jury, as John Derrick well knew. He believed—I am not certain at this hour whether with reason or otherwise—that that class of jurors were customarily chosen on a lower qualification than mine, and he had at first refused to accept the summons. The man who served it had taken the matter very coolly. He had said that my attendance or non-attendance was nothing to him; there the summons was, and I should deal with it at my own peril, and not at his.

For a day or two I was undecided whether to respond to this call, or take no notice of it. I was not conscious of the slightest mysterious bias, influence, or attraction, one way or other. Of that I am as strictly sure as of every other statement that I make here. Ultimately I decided, as a break in the monotony of my life, that I would go.

The appointed morning was a raw morning in the month of November. There was a dense brown fog in Piccadilly, and it became positively black and in the last degree oppressive east of Temple Bar. I found the passages and staircases of the Court-House flaringly lighted with gas, and the Court itself similarly illuminated. I *think* that, until I was conducted by officers into the Old Court and saw its crowded state, I did not know that the murderer was to be tried that day. I *think* that, until I was so helped into the Old Court with considerable difficulty, I did not know into which of the two

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courts sitting my summons would take me. But this must not be received as a positive assertion, for I am not completely satisfied in my mind on either point.

I took my seat in the place appropriated to jurors in waiting, and I looked about the court as well as I could through the cloud of fog and breath that was heavy in it. I noticed the black vapour hanging like a murky curtain outside the great windows, and I noticed the stifled sound of wheels on the straw or tan that was littered in the street; also, the hum of the people gathered there, which a shrill whistle, or a louder song or hail than the rest, occasionally pierced. Soon afterward the judges, two in number, entered, and took their seats. The buzz in the court was awfully hushed. The direction was given to put the murderer to the bar. He appeared there. And in that same instant I recognised in him the first of the two men who had gone down Piccadilly.

If my name had been called then I doubt if I could have answered to it audibly; but it was called about sixth or eighth in the panel, and I was by that time able to say, "Here!"

Now, observe. As I stepped into the box, the prisoner, who had been looking on attentively, but with no sign of concern, became violently agitated, and beckoned to his attorney. The prisoner's wish to challenge me was so manifest that it occasioned a pause, during which the attorney, with his hand upon the dock, whispered

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with his client, and shook his head. I afterward had it from that gentleman, that the prisoner's first affrighted words to him were, "*At all hazards, challenge that man!*" But, as he would give no reason for it, and admitted that he had not even known my name until he heard it called and I appeared, it was not done.

Both on the ground already explained, that I wish to avoid reviving the unwholesome memory of that murderer, and also because a detailed account of his long trial is by no means indispensable to my narrative, I shall confine myself closely to such incidents in the ten days and nights during which we, the jury, were kept together, as directly bear on my own curious personal experience. It is in that, and not in the murderer, that I seek to interest my reader. It is to that, and not to a page of the Newgate Calendar, that I beg attention.

I was chosen foreman of the jury. On the second morning of the trial, after evidence had been taken for two hours (I heard the church clocks strike), happening to cast my eyes over my brother jurymen, I found an inexplicable difficulty in counting them. I counted them several times, yet always with the same difficulty. In short, I made them one too many.

I touched the brother jurymen whose place was next me, and I whispered to him, "Oblige me by counting us." He looked surprised by the request, but turned his head and counted.

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"Why," says he, suddenly, "we are thirt— But no, it's not possible. No. We are twelve."

According to my counting that day, we were always right in detail, but in the gross we were always one too many. There was no appearance—no figure—to account for it, but I had now an inward foreshadowing of the figure that was surely coming.

The jury were housed at the London Tavern. We all slept in one large room on separate tables, and we were constantly in the charge and under the eye of the officer sworn to hold us in safe-keeping. I see no reason for suppressing the real name of that officer. He was intelligent, highly polite, and obliging, and (I was glad to hear) much respected in the city. He had an agreeable presence, good eyes, enviable black whiskers, and a fine sonorous voice. His name was Mr. Harker.

When we turned into our twelve beds at night, Mr. Harker's bed was drawn across the door. On the night of the second day, not being disposed to lie down, and seeing Mr. Harker sitting on his bed, I went and sat beside him, and offered him a pinch of snuff. As Mr. Harker's hand touched mine in taking it from my box, a peculiar shiver crossed him, and he said, "Who is this?"

Following Mr. Harker's eyes, and looking along the room, I saw again the figure I expected—the second of the two men who had gone down Piccadilly. I rose and advanced a

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few steps, then stopped, and looked round at Mr. Harker. He was quite unconcerned, laughed, and said, in a pleasant way, "I thought for a moment we had a thirteenth jurymen, without a bed. But I see it is the moonlight."

Making no revelation to Mr. Harker, but inviting him to take a walk with me to the end of the room, I watched what the figure did. It stood for a few moments by the bedside of each of my eleven brother jurymen, close to the pillow. It always went to the right-hand side of the bed, and always passed out crossing the foot of the next bed. It seemed, from the action of the head, merely to look down pensively at each recumbent figure. It took no notice of me, or of my bed, which was that nearest to Mr. Harker's. It seemed to go out where the moonlight came in, through a high window, as by an aerial flight of stairs.

Next morning at breakfast, it appeared that everybody present had dreamed of the murdered man last night, except myself and Mr. Harker.

I now felt as convinced that the second man who had gone down Piccadilly was the murdered man (so to speak), as if it had been borne into my comprehension by his immediate testimony. But even this took place, and in a manner for which I was not at all prepared.

On the fifth day of the trial, when the case for the prosecution was drawing to a close, a miniature of the murdered man, missing from his bedroom upon the discovery of the deed, and

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afterward found in a hiding-place where the murderer had been seen digging, was put in evidence. Having been identified by the witness under examination, it was handed up to the bench, and thence handed down to be inspected by the jury. As an officer in a black gown was making his way with it across to me, the figure of the second man who had gone down Piccadilly impetuously started from the crowd, caught the miniature from the officer, and gave it to me with his own hands, at the same time saying, in a low and hollow tone—before I saw the miniature, which was in a locket—“*I was younger then, and my face was not then drained of blood.*”

It also came between me and the brother juryman to whom I would have given the miniature, and between him and the brother juryman to whom he would have given it, and so passed it on through the whole of our number, and back into my possession. Not one of them, however, detected this.

At table, and generally when we were shut up together in Mr. Harker's custody, we had from the first naturally discussed the day's proceedings a good deal. On that fifth day, the case for the prosecution being closed, and we having that side of the question in a completed shape before us, our discussion was more animated and serious. Among our number was a vestryman—the densest idiot I have ever seen at large—who met the plainest evidence with

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the most preposterous objections, and who was sided with by two flabby parochial parasites—all the three impanelled from a district so delivered over to fever that they ought to have been upon their own trial for five hundred murders. When these mischievous blockheads were at their loudest, which was toward midnight, while some of us were already preparing for bed, I again saw the murdered man. He stood grimly behind them, beckoning to me. On my going toward them, and striking into the conversation, he immediately retired. This was the beginning of a separate series of appearances, confined to that long room in which *we* were confined. Whenever a knot of my brother jurymen laid their heads together, I saw the head of the murdered man among theirs. Whenever their comparison of notes was going against him, he would solemnly and irresistibly beckon to me.

It will be borne in mind that down to the production of the miniature, on the fifth day of the trial, I had never seen the appearance in court. Three changes occurred now that we entered on the case for the defence. Two of them I will mention together, first. The figure was now in court continually, and it never there addressed itself to me, but always to the person who was speaking at the time. For instance: the throat of the murdered man had been cut straight across. In the opening speech for the defence, it was suggested that

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the deceased might have cut his own throat. At that very moment, the figure, with its throat in the dreadful condition referred to (this it had concealed before), stood at the speaker's elbow, motioning across and across its windpipe, now with the right hand, now with the left, vigorously suggesting to the speaker himself the impossibility of such a wound having been self-inflicted by either hand. For another instance: a witness to character, a woman, deposed to the prisoner's being the most amiable of mankind. The figure at that instant stood on the floor before her, looking her full in the face, and pointing out the prisoner's evil countenance with an extended arm and an outstretched finger.

The third change now to be added impressed me strongly as the most marked and striking of all. I do not theorise upon it; I accurately state it, and there leave it. Although the appearance was not itself perceived by those whom it addressed, its coming close to such persons was invariably attended by some trepidation or disturbance on their part. It seemed to me as if it were prevented, by laws to which I was not amenable, from fully revealing itself to others, and yet as if it could invisibly, dumbly, and darkly overshadow their minds. When the leading counsel for the defence suggested that hypothesis of suicide, and the figure stood at the learned gentleman's elbow, frightfully sawing at its severed throat, it is undeniable that the counsel faltered in his

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speech, lost for a few seconds the thread of his ingenious discourse, wiped his forehead with his handkerchief, and turned extremely pale. When the witness to character was confronted by the appearance, her eyes most certainly did follow the direction of its pointed finger, and rest in great hesitation and trouble upon the prisoner's face. Two additional illustrations will suffice. On the eighth day of the trial, after the pause which was every day made early in the afternoon for a few minutes' rest and refreshment, I came back into court with the rest of the jury some little time before the return of the judges. Standing up in the box and looking about me, I thought the figure was not there, until, chancing to raise my eyes to the gallery, I saw it bending forward, and leaning over a very decent woman, as if to assure itself whether the judges had resumed their seats or not. Immediately afterward that woman screamed, fainted, and was carried out. So with the venerable, sagacious, and patient judge who conducted the trial. When the case was over, and he settled himself and his papers to sum up, the murdered man, entering by the judges' door, advanced to his Lordship's desk, and looked eagerly over his shoulder at the pages of his notes which he was turning. A change came over his Lordship's face; his hand stopped; the peculiar shiver that I knew so well passed over him; he faltered, 'Excuse me, gentlemen, for a few moments. I am somewhat oppressed

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by the vitiated air." And he did not recover until he had drunk a glass of water.

Through all the monotony of six of those interminable ten days—the same judges and others on the bench, the same murderer in the dock, the same lawyers at the table, the same tones of question and answer rising to the roof of the court, the same scratching of the judge's pen, the same ushers going in and out, the same lights kindled at the same hour when there had been any natural light of day, the same foggy curtain outside the great windows when it was foggy, the same rain pattering and dripping when it was rainy, the same foot-marks of turnkeys and prisoner day after day on the same sawdust, the same keys locking and unlocking the same heavy doors—through all the wearisome monotony which made me feel as if I had been foreman of the jury for a vast period of time, and Piccadilly had flourished coevally with Babylon, the murdered man never lost one trace of his distinctness in my eyes, nor was he at any moment less distinct than anybody else. I must not omit, as a matter of fact, that I never once saw the appearance which I call by the name of the murdered man look at the murderer. Again and again I wondered, "Why does he not?" But he never did.

Nor did he look at me, after the production of the miniature, until the last closing minutes of the trial arrived. We retired to consider, at

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seven minutes before ten at night. The idiotic vestryman and his two parochial parasites gave us so much trouble that we twice returned into court to beg to have certain extracts from the judge's notes re-read. Nine of us had not the smallest doubt about those passages, neither, I believe, had anyone in the court. The dunder-headed triumvirate, however, having no idea but obstruction, disputed them for that very reason. At length we prevailed, and finally the jury returned into court at ten minutes past twelve.

The murdered man at that time stood directly opposite the jury-box, on the other side of the court. As I took my place, his eyes rested on me with great attention. He seemed satisfied, and slowly shook a great gray veil, which he carried on his arm for the first time, over his head and whole form. As I gave in our verdict, "Guilty," the veil collapsed, all was gone, and his place was empty.

The murderer, being asked by the judge, according to usage, whether he had anything to say before sentence of death should be passed upon him, indistinctly muttered something which was described in the leading newspapers of the following day as "a few rambling, incoherent, and half-audible words, in which he was understood to complain that he had not had a fair trial, because the foreman of the jury was prepossessed against him." The remarkable declaration that he really made was

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this: "My Lord, I knew I was a doomed man when the foreman of my jury came into the box. My Lord, I knew he would never let me off, because, before I was taken, he somehow got to my bedside in the night, woke me, and put a rope round my neck."

THE NECKLACE

BY

HENRI RENÉ ALBERT GUY DE MAUPASSANT

SHE was one of those pretty, charming girls who are sometimes, as if through the irony of fate, born into a family of clerks. She was without dowry or expectations, and had no means of becoming known, appreciated, loved, wedded, by any rich or influential man; so she allowed herself to be married to a small clerk belonging to the Ministry of Public Instruction. She dressed plainly because she could not afford to dress well, and was unhappy because she felt she had dropped from her proper station, which for women is a matter of attractiveness, beauty, and grace, rather than of family descent. Good manners, an intuitive knowledge of what is elegant, nimbleness of wit, are the only requirements necessary to place a woman of the people on an equality with one of the aristocracy.

She fretted constantly, feeling all things delicate and luxurious to be her birthright. She suffered on account of the meagreness of her surroundings, the bareness of the walls, the tarnished furniture, the ugly curtains; deficiencies which would have left any other woman of her class untouched, irritated and tormented

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her. The sight of the little Breton peasant who did her humble housework engendered hopeless regrets followed by fantastic dreams. She thought of a noiseless, hallowed ante-room, with Oriental carpets, lighted with tall branching candlesticks of bronze and of two big, knee-breeched footmen, drowsy from the stove-heated air, dozing in great arm-chairs. She thought of a long drawing-room hung with ancient brocade, of a beautiful cabinet holding priceless curios, of an alluring, scented boudoir intended for five-o'clock chats with intimates, with men famous and courted, and whose acquaintance is longed for by all women.

When she sat down to dinner, at the round table spread with a cloth three days old, opposite her husband who uncovered the tureen, and exclaimed with ecstasy, "Ah, I like a good stew! I know nothing to beat this!" she thought of dainty dinners, of shining plate, of tapestry which peopled the walls with human shapes, and with strange birds flying among fairy trees. And then she thought of delicious viands served in costly dishes, and of murmured gallantries which you listen to with a comfortable smile while you are eating the rose-tinted flesh of a trout or the wing of a quail.

She had no handsome gowns, no jewels—nothing, though these were her whole life; it was these that meant existence to her. She would so have liked to please, to be thought fascinating, to be envied, to be sought out. She had a friend, a

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former schoolmate at the convent, who was rich, but whom she did not like to go to see any more because she would come home jealous, covetous.

But one evening her husband returned home jubilant, holding a large envelope in his hand.

"Here is something for you," he said.

She tore open the cover sharply, and drew out a printed card bearing these words: "The Minister of Public Instruction and Mme. Georges Ramponneau request the honour of M. and Mme. Loisel's company at the palace of the Ministry on Monday evening, January 18th."

Instead of being delighted as her husband expected, she threw the invitation on the table with disgust, muttering, "What do you think I can do with that?"

"But, my dear, I thought you would be pleased. You never go anywhere, and this is such a rare opportunity. I had hard work to get it. Every one is wild to go; it is very select, and invitations to clerks are scarce. The whole official world will be there."

She looked at him with a scornful eye, as she said petulantly, "And what have I to put on my back?" He had not thought of that. He stammered, "Why, the dress you wear to the theatre; it looks all right to me."

He stopped in despair, seeing his wife was crying. Two big tears rolled down from the corners of her eyes to the corners of her mouth.

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"What's the matter? What's the matter?" he faltered.

With great effort, she controlled herself, and replied coldly, while she dried her wet cheeks:

"Nothing, except that I have no dress, and, for that reason, cannot go to the ball. Give your invitation to some fellow-clerk whose wife is better provided than I am."

He was dumfounded, but replied:

"Come, Mathilde, let us see now—how much would a suitable dress cost; one you could wear at other times—something quite simple?"

She pondered several moments, calculating, and guessing too, how much she could safely ask for without an instant refusal or bringing down upon her head a volley of objections from her frugal husband.

At length she said hesitatingly, "I can't say exactly, but I think I could do with four hundred francs."

He changed colour because he was laying aside just that sum to buy a gun and treat himself to a little shooting next summer on the plain of Nanterre, with several friends, who went down there on Sundays to shoot larks. Nevertheless, he said: "Very well, I will give you four hundred francs. Get a pretty dress."

The day of the ball drew near, and Mme. Loisel seemed despondent, nervous, upset, though her dress was all ready. One evening her husband observed: "I say, what is the

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matter, Mathilde? You have been very queer lately." And she replied, "It exasperates me not to have a single ornament of any kind to put on. I shall look like a fright—I would almost rather stay at home." He answered: "Why not wear flowers? They are very fashionable at this time of the year. You can get a handful of fine roses for ten francs."

But she was not persuaded. "No, it's so mortifying to look poverty-stricken among women who are rich."

Then her husband exclaimed: "How slow you are! Go and see your friend, Mme. Forestier, and ask her to lend you some jewels. You know her well enough to do that."

She gave an exclamation of delight: "True! I never thought of that!"

Next day she went to her friend and poured out her woes. Mme. Forestier went to a closet with a glass door, took out a large jewel-box, brought it back, opened it, and said to Mme. Loisel, "Here, take your choice, my dear."

She looked at some bracelets, then at a pearl necklace, and then at a Venetian cross curiously wrought of gold and precious stones. She tried on the ornaments before the mirror, hesitated, was loath to take them off and return them. She kept inquiring, "Have you any more?"

"Certainly, look for yourself. I don't know what you want."

Suddenly Mathilde discovered, in a black satin box, a magnificent necklace of diamonds, and

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her heart began to beat with excitement. With trembling hands she took the necklace and fastened it round her neck outside her dress, becoming lost in admiration of herself as she looked in the glass. Tremulous with fear lest she be refused, she asked, "Will you lend me this—only this?"

"Yes, of course I will."

Mathilde fell upon her friend's neck, kissed her passionately, and rushed off with her treasure.

The day of the ball arrived.

Mme. Loisel was a great success. She was prettier than them all, lovely, gracious, smiling, and wild with delight. All the men looked at her, inquired her name, tried to be introduced; all the officials of the Ministry wanted a waltz—even the minister himself noticed her. She danced with abandon, with ecstasy, intoxicated with joy, forgetting everything in the triumph of her beauty, in the radiance of her success, in a kind of mirage of bliss made up of all this worship, this adulation, of all these stirring impulses, and of that realisation of perfect surrender, so sweet to the soul of woman.

She left about four in the morning.

Since midnight her husband had been sleeping in a little deserted anteroom with three other men whose wives were enjoying themselves. He threw over her shoulders the wraps he had brought, ordinary, everyday garments, con-

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trasting sorrily with her elegant ball dress. She felt this, and wanted to get away so as not to be seen by the other women, who were putting on costly furs.

Loisel detained her: "Wait a little; you will catch cold outside; I will go and call a cab."

But she would not listen to him, and hurried down-stairs. When they reached the street they could not find a carriage, and they began to look for one, shouting to the cabmen who were passing by. They went down toward the river in desperation, shivering with cold. At last they found on the quays one of those antiquated, all-night broughams, which, in Paris, wait till after dark before venturing to display their dilapidation. It took them to their door in the Rue des Martyrs, and once more, wearily, they climbed the stairs.

Now all was over for her; as for him, he remembered that he must be at his office at ten o'clock. She threw off her cloak before the glass, that she might behold herself once more in all her magnificence. Suddenly she uttered a cry of dismay—the necklace was gone!

Her husband, already half-undressed, called out, "Anything wrong?"

She turned wildly toward him: "I have—I have—I've lost Mme. Forestier's necklace!"

He stood aghast: "Where? When? You haven't!"

They looked in the folds of her dress, in the

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folds of her cloak, in her pocket, everywhere. They could not find it.

"Are you sure," he said, "that you had it on when you left the ball?"

"Yes; I felt it in the corridor of the palace."

"But if you had lost it in the street, we should have heard it fall. It must be in the cab."

"No doubt. Did you take his number?"

"No. And didn't you notice it either?"

"No."

They looked at each other, terror-stricken. At last Loisel put on his clothes.

"I shall go back on foot," he said, "over the whole route we came by, to see if I can't find it."

He went out, and she sat waiting in her ball dress, too dazed to go to bed, cold, crushed, lifeless, unable to think. Her husband came back at seven o'clock. He had found nothing. He went to Police Headquarters, to the newspaper office—where he advertised a reward. He went to the cab companies—to every place, in fact, that seemed at all hopeful.

She waited all day in the same awful state of mind at this terrible misfortune.

Loisel returned at night with a wan, white face. He had found nothing.

"Write immediately to your friend," said he, "that you have broken the clasp of her necklace, and that you have taken it to be mended. That will give us time to turn about."

She wrote as he told her.

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By the end of the week they had given up all hope. Loisel, who looked five years older, said, "We must plan how we can replace the necklace."

The next day they took the black satin box to the jeweller whose name was found inside. He referred to his books.

"You did not buy that necklace of me, Madame. I can only have supplied the case."

They went from jeweller to jeweller, hunting for a necklace like the lost one, trying to remember its appearance, heartsick with shame and misery. Finally, in a shop at the Palais Royal, they found a string of diamonds which looked to them just like the other. The price was forty thousand francs, but they could have it for thirty-six thousand. They begged the jeweller to keep it three days for them, and made an agreement with him that he should buy it back for thirty-four thousand francs if they found the lost necklace before the last of February.

Loisel had inherited eighteen thousand francs from his father. He could borrow the remainder. And he did borrow right and left, asking a thousand francs of one, five hundred of another, five louis here, three louis there. He gave notes, assumed heavy obligations, trafficked with money-lenders at usurious rates, and, putting the rest of his life in pawn, pledged his signature over and over again. Not knowing how he was to make it all good, and terrified by the penalty

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yet to come, by the dark destruction which hung over him, by the certainty of incalculable deprivations of body and tortures of soul, he went to get the new bauble, throwing down upon the jeweller's counter the thirty-six thousand francs.

When Mme. Loisel returned the necklace, Mme. Forestier said to her coldly: "Why did you not bring it back sooner? I might have wanted it."

She did not open the case—to the great relief of her friend.

Supposing she had! Would she have discovered the substitution, and what would she have said? Would she not have accused Mme. Loisel of theft?

Mme. Loisel now knew what it was to be in want, but she showed sudden and remarkable courage. That awful debt must be paid, and she would pay it.

They sent away their servant, and moved up into a garret under the roof. She began to find out what heavy housework and the fatiguing drudgery of the kitchen meant. She washed the dishes, scraping the greasy pots and pans with her rosy nails. She washed the dirty linen, the shirts and dish-towels, which dried upon the line. She lugged slops and refuse down to the street every morning, bringing back fresh water, stopping on every landing, panting for breath. With her basket on her arm, and dressed like a woman of the people, she haggled with the

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fruiterer, the grocer, and the butcher, often insulted, but getting every sou's worth that belonged to her.

Each month notes had to be met, others renewed, extensions of time procured. Her husband worked in the evenings, straightening out tradesmen's accounts; he sat up late at night, copying manuscripts at five sous a page.

And this they did for ten years.

At the end of that time they had paid up everything, everything—with all the principal and the accumulated compound interest.

Mme. Loisel looked old now. She had become a domestic drudge, sinewy, rough-skinned, coarse. With towsled hair, tucked-up skirts, and red hands, she would talk loudly while mopping the floor with great splashes of water. But sometimes, when alone, she sat near the window, and she thought of that gay evening long ago, of the ball where she had been so beautiful, so much admired. Supposing she had not lost the necklace — what then? Who knows? Who knows? Life is so strange and shifting. How easy it is to be ruined or saved!

But one Sunday, going for a walk in the Champs Élysées to refresh herself after her hard week's work, she accidentally came upon a familiar-looking woman with a child. It was Mme. Forestier, still young, still lovely, still charming.

Mme. Loisel became agitated. Should she

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“speak to her? Of course. Now that she had paid, she would tell her all about it. Why not? She went up to her.

“How do you do, Jeanne?”

The other, astonished at the easy manner toward her assumed by a plain housewife whom she did not recognise, said:

“But, Madame, you have made a mistake; I do not know you.”

“Why, I am Mathilde Loisel!”

Her friend gave a start.

“Oh, my poor Mathilde,” she cried, “how you have changed!”

“Yes; I have seen hard days since last I saw you; hard enough—and all because of you.”

“Of me? And why?”

“You remember the diamond necklace you loaned me to wear at the Ministry ball?”

“Yes, I do. What of it?”

“Well, I lost it!”

“But you brought it back—explain yourself.”

“I bought one just like it, and it took us ten years to pay for it. It was not easy for us who had nothing, but it is all over now, and I am glad.”

Mme. Forestier stared.

“And you bought a necklace of diamonds to replace mine?”

“Yes; and you never knew the difference, they were so alike.” And she smiled with joyful pride at the success of it all.

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Mme. Forestier, deeply moved, took both her hands.

“Oh, my poor Mathilde! My necklace was paste. It was worth only about five hundred francs!”

PETER SCHLEMIHL

BY

ADELBERT VON CHAMISSE

I

AFTER a prosperous, but to me very wearisome, voyage we at last came into port. Immediately on landing, I got together my few effects, and, squeezing through the crowd, went into the nearest and humblest inn which first met my gaze. When I requested a room, the waiter scanned me from head to foot, and conducted me to one. I asked for some cold water, and for the correct address of Mr. Thomas John, which was described as being "by the north gate, the first country-house to the right, a large new house of red and white marble, with many pillars." This was enough. As the day was not yet far advanced, I untied my bundle, took out my newly turned black coat, dressed myself in my best clothes, and, with my letter of recommendation, set out for the man who was to assist me in the attainment of my moderate wishes.

After proceeding up the north street, I reached the gate, and saw the marble columns glittering through the trees. Having wiped the dust from my shoes with my pocket-handkerchief, and re-

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adjusted my cravat, I rang the bell—offering up at the same time a silent prayer. The door flew open, and the porter sent in my name. I soon had the honour to be invited into the park, where Mr. John was walking with a few friends. I recognised him at once by his corpulency and self-complacent air. He received me very well—just as a rich man receives a poor devil; and turning to me, took my letter. “Oh, from my brother! it is a long time since I heard from him: is he well? Yonder,” he went on—turning to the company, and pointing to a distant hill—“yonder is the site of the new building.” He broke the seal without discontinuing the conversation, which turned upon riches. “The man,” he said, “who does not possess at least a million is a poor wretch.” “Oh, how true!” I exclaimed, in the fulness of my heart. He seemed pleased at this, and replied with a smile, “Stop here, my dear friend; afterward I shall, perhaps, have time to tell you what I think of this,” pointing to the letter, which he then put into his pocket, and, turning round to the company, offering his arm to a young lady: his example was followed by the other gentlemen, each politely escorting a lady; and the whole party proceeded toward a little hill thickly planted with blooming roses.

I followed without troubling any one, for none took the least further notice of me. The party was in high spirits—lounging about and jesting—speaking sometimes of trifling matters very

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seriously, and of serious matters as triflingly—and exercising their wit in particular to great advantage on their absent friends and their affairs. I was too ignorant of what they were talking about to understand much of it, and too anxious and absorbed in my own reflections to occupy myself with the solution of such enigmas as their conversation presented.

By this time we had reached the thicket of roses. The lovely Fanny, who seemed to be the queen of the day, was obstinately bent on plucking a rose-branch for herself, and, in the attempt, pricked her finger with a thorn. The crimson stream, as if flowing from the dark-tinted rose, tinged her fair hand with the purple current. This circumstance set the whole company in commotion; and court-plaster was called for. A quiet, elderly man, tall and meagre-looking, who was one of the company, but whom I had not before observed, immediately put his hand into the tight breast-pocket of his old-fashioned coat of gray sarsenet, pulled out a small letter-case, opened it, and, with a most respectful bow, presented the lady with the wished-for article. She received it without noticing the giver or thanking him. The wound was bound up, and the party proceeded along the hill toward the back part, from which they enjoyed an extensive view across the green labyrinth of the park to the wide-spreading ocean. The view was truly a magnificent one. A slight speck was observed on the horizon, between the dark flood and the

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azure sky. "A telescope!" called out Mr. John; but before any of the servants could answer the summons, the gray man, with a modest bow, drew his hand from his pocket and presented a beautiful Dollond's telescope to Mr. John, who, on looking through it, informed the company that the speck in the distance was the ship which had sailed yesterday, and which was detained within sight of the haven by contrary winds. The telescope passed from hand to hand, but was not returned to the owner, whom I gazed at with astonishment, since I could not conceive how so large an instrument could have proceeded from so small a pocket. This, however, seemed to excite surprise in no one; and the gray man appeared to create as little interest as myself.

Refreshments were now brought forward, consisting of the rarest fruits from all parts of the world, served up in the most costly dishes. Mr. John did the honours with unaffected grace, and addressed me for the second time, saying, "You had better eat; you did not get such things at sea." I acknowledged his politeness with a bow, which, however, he did not perceive, having turned round to speak with some one else.

The party would willingly have stopped some time here on the declivity of the hill, to enjoy the extensive prospect before them, had they not been apprehensive of the dampness of the grass. "How delightful it would be," exclaimed some one, "if we had a Turkey carpet to lay down here!" The wish was scarcely expressed when

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the man in the gray coat put his hand in his pocket, and, with a modest and even humble air, pulled out a rich Turkey carpet, embroidered in gold. The servant received it as a matter of course, and spread it out on the desired spot; and, without any ceremony, the company seated themselves on it. Confounded by what I saw, I gazed again at the man, his pocket, and the carpet, which was more than twenty feet in length and ten in breadth; I rubbed my eyes, not knowing what to think, particularly as no one appeared to see anything extraordinary in the matter.

I should gladly have made some inquiries respecting the man, and asked who he was, but knew not to whom I should address myself, for I felt almost more afraid of the servants than of their master. At length I took courage, and, stepping up to a young man who seemed of less consequence than the others, and who was more frequently standing by himself, I begged of him, in a low tone, to tell me who the obliging gentleman in the gray cloak was. "That man who looks like a piece of thread just escaped from a tailor's needle?" "Yes; he who is standing alone yonder." "I do not know," was the reply; and to avoid, as it seemed, any further conversation with me, he turned away, and spoke of some commonplace matters with a neighbour.

The sun's rays now being stronger, the ladies complained of feeling oppressed by the heat; and the lovely Fanny, turning carelessly to the

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gray man, to whom I had not yet observed that any one had addressed the most trifling question, asked him if, perchance, he had not a tent about him. He replied with a low bow, as if some unmerited honour had been conferred upon him, and, putting his hand in his pocket, drew from it canvas, poles, cord, iron—in short, everything belonging to the most splendid tent for a party of pleasure. The young gentlemen assisted in pitching it, and it covered the whole carpet; but no one seemed to think that there was anything extraordinary about the matter.

I had long felt secretly uneasy—indeed, almost horrified; but how was this feeling increased when, at the next wish expressed, I saw him take from his pocket three horses! Yes, Adelbert, three large beautiful steeds, with saddles and bridles, out of the very pocket whence had already issued a letter-case, a telescope, a carpet twenty feet broad and ten in length, and a pavilion of the same extent, with all its appurtenances! Did I not assure thee that my own eyes had seen all this, thou wouldst certainly disbelieve it.

This man, although he appeared so humble and embarrassed in his air and manners, and passed so unheeded, had inspired me with such a feeling of horror by the unearthly paleness of his countenance, from which I could not avert my eyes, that I was unable longer to endure it.

I determined, therefore, to steal away from the company, which appeared no difficult mat-

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ter, from the undistinguished part I acted in it. I resolved to return to the town, and pay another visit to Mr. John the following morning, and, at the same time, make some inquiries of him relative to the extraordinary man in gray, provided I could command sufficient courage. Would to Heaven that such good-fortune had awaited me!

I had stolen safely down the hill, through the thicket of roses, and now found myself on an open plain; but, fearing lest I should be met out of the proper path, crossing the grass, I cast an inquisitive glance around, and started as I beheld the man in the gray cloak advancing toward me. He took off his hat, and made me a lower bow than mortal had ever yet favoured me with. It was evident that he wished to address me, and I could not avoid encountering him without seeming rude. I returned his salutation, therefore, and stood bareheaded in the sunshine as if rooted to the ground. I gazed at him with the utmost horror, and felt like a bird fascinated by a serpent.

He affected an air of embarrassment. With his eyes on the ground, he bowed several times, drew nearer, and at last, without looking up, addressed me in a low and hesitating voice, almost in the tone of a suppliant: "Will you, sir, excuse my importunity in venturing to intrude upon you in so unusual a manner? I have a request to make—would you most graciously be pleased to allow me——?" "Hold! for Heaven's

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sake!" I exclaimed. "What can I do for a man who——" I stopped in some confusion, which he seemed to share. After a moment's pause, he resumed: "During the short time I have had the pleasure to be in your company, I have—permit me, sir, to say—been looking with intense admiration at your most beautiful shadow, and have remarked the air of noble indifference with which you, at the same time, turn from the glorious picture at your feet, as if disdainful to vouchsafe it a glance. Excuse the boldness of my proposal; but perhaps you would have no objection to selling me your shadow?" He stopped, while my head turned round like a mill-wheel. What was I to think of so extraordinary a proposal? Sell my shadow! "He must be mad," thought I, and assuming a tone more in accordance with the submissiveness of his own, I replied: "My good friend, are you not content with your own shadow? This would be a bargain of a strange nature indeed!"

"I have in my pocket," he said, "many things which may possess some value in *your* eyes: for that inestimable shadow, *I* should deem the highest price too little."

A cold shudder came over me as I recollected the pocket; and I could not conceive what had induced me to style him "*good friend*," which I took care not to repeat, endeavouring to make up for it by a studied politeness.

I now resumed the conversation: "But, sir—excuse your humble servant—I am at a loss to

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comprehend your meaning—my shadow?—how can I—?”

“Permit me,” he exclaimed, interrupting me, “to gather up the noble image as it lies on the ground, and to take it into my possession. As to the manner of accomplishment, leave that to me. In return, and as an evidence of my gratitude, I will let you take your choice of all the treasures I have in my pocket, among which are a variety of charming articles, not exactly adapted for you, who, I am sure, would prefer the wishing-cap of Fortunatus, all made new and sound again, and a lucky purse which also belonged to him.”

“Fortunatus’s purse!” cried I; for, great as was my mental anguish, with that one word he had penetrated the deepest recesses of my soul. A feeling of giddiness came over me, and double ducats glittered before my eyes.

“Be pleased, gracious sir, to examine this purse, and make a trial of its contents.” He put his hand in his pocket, and drew forth a large, strongly stitched bag of stout Cordovan leather, with a couple of strings to match, and presented it to me. I seized it—took out ten gold pieces, then ten more, and this I repeated again and again. Instantly, I held out my hand to him. “Done,” said I; “the bargain is made: my shadow for the purse.” “Agreed,” he answered; and, immediately kneeling down, I beheld him, with extraordinary dexterity, gently loosen my shadow from the grass, lift it up, fold it together,

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and, finally, put it in his pocket. He then rose, bowed once more to me, and directed his steps toward the rose-bushes. I fancied I heard him quietly laughing to himself. However, I held the purse fast by the two strings. The earth was basking beneath the brightness of the sun—but about that time I lost consciousness.

On recovering my senses, I hastened to quit a place where I hoped there was nothing further to detain me. I first filled my pockets with gold, then fastened the strings of the purse round my neck, and concealed it in my bosom. I passed unnoticed out of the park, gained the high road, and took the way to the town. As I was thoughtfully approaching the gate, I heard some one behind me exclaiming, "Young man! young man! you have lost your shadow!" I turned and perceived an old woman calling after me. "Thank you, my good woman," said I, and throwing her a piece of gold for her well-intended information, I stepped under the trees. At the gate, again, it was my fate to hear the sentry inquiring where the gentleman had left his shadow, and immediately after I heard a couple of women exclaiming, "Jesus Maria, the poor man has no shadow!" All this began to depress me, and I carefully avoided walking in the sun. But this was not possible everywhere, and in the next broad street I had to cross, unfortunately at the very hour when the boys were coming out of school, a humpbacked lout of a fellow—I see him yet—soon made the discovery that I was

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without a shadow, and communicated the news, with loud shouts, to a knot of young urchins. The whole swarm immediately surrounded me and pelted me with mud. "People," cried they, "generally take their shadows with them when they walk in the sun!"

In order to drive them away, I threw gold by handfuls among them, and sprang into a hackney-coach which some compassionate spectators sent to my rescue.

As soon as I found myself alone in the rolling vehicle, I began to weep bitterly. I had by this time a misgiving that, in the same degree in which gold in this world prevails over merit and virtue, by so much one's shadow excels gold. Now that I had sacrificed my conscience for riches, and given my shadow in exchange for mere gold, what on earth would become of me?

As the coach stopped at the door of my inn, I felt much perplexed and not at all disposed to enter so wretched an abode. I called for my things, and received them with an air of contempt, threw down a few gold pieces, and requested to be driven to a first-rate hotel. This house had a northern aspect, so that I had nothing to fear from the sun. I dismissed the coachman with gold; asked to be conducted to the best apartment, and locked myself up in it as soon as possible.

Imagine, my friend, what I then did! Oh, my dear Chamisso, I blush to mention it even to thee!

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I drew the ill-fated purse from my bosom, and, in a sort of frenzy that raged like a self-fed fire within me, I took out gold—gold—gold—more and more, strewed it on the floor, trampled upon it, and, feasting on its very sound and brilliancy, added coin to coin, rolling and revelling on the gorgeous bed, until I became exhausted.

Thus passed away that day and evening, and, as my door remained locked, night found me still lying on the gold, where, at last, sleep overpowered me.

I awoke—it seemed yet early—my watch had stopped. I felt thirsty, faint, and worn out; for since the preceding morning I had not tasted food. I now cast from me, with loathing and disgust, the very gold with which but a short time before I had satiated my foolish heart. Now I knew not where to put it—I dared not leave it lying there. I examined my purse to see if it would hold it—impossible! Neither of my windows opened on the sea. I had no other resource but, with toil and great fatigue, to drag it to a huge chest which stood in a closet in my room; where I put it all, with the exception of a handful or two. As soon as possible I sent for some refreshment and asked for the landlord.

I entered into some conversation with this man respecting the arrangement of my future establishment. He recommended for my personal attendant one Bendel, whose honest and intelligent countenance immediately preposessed me in his favour. It is this individual

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whose persevering attachment has consoled me in all the miseries of my life, and enabled me to bear up under my wretched lot. I was occupied the whole day in my room with servants in want of a situation, and tradesmen of every description. I decided on my future plans, and purchased various articles of vertu and splendid jewels, in order to get rid of some of my gold; but nothing seemed to diminish the inexhaustible heap.

I now reflected on my situation with the utmost uneasiness. I dared not take a single step beyond my own door; and in the evening I had forty wax tapers lighted before I ventured to leave the shade. I reflected with horror on the frightful encounter with the school-boys; yet I resolved, if I could command sufficient courage, to put the public opinion to a second trial. The nights were now moonlit. Late in the evening I wrapped myself in a large cloak, pulled my hat over my eyes, and, trembling like a criminal, stole out of the house.

I did not venture to leave the friendly shadow of the houses until I had reached a distant part of the town; and then I emerged into the broad moonlight fully prepared to hear my fate from the lips of the passers-by.

Spare me, my beloved friend, the painful recital of all that I was doomed to endure. The women often expressed the deepest sympathy for me—a sympathy not less piercing to my soul than the scoffs of the young people and the

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proud contempt of the men, particularly of the more corpulent who threw an ample shadow before them. A fair and beauteous maiden, apparently accompanied by her parents, who gravely kept looking straight before them, chanced to cast a beaming glance on me; but was evidently startled at perceiving that I was without a shadow, and, hiding her lovely face in her veil, and holding down her head, passed silently on.

This was past all endurance. Tears streamed from my eyes; and, with a heart pierced through and through, I once more took refuge in the shade. I leaned against the houses for support, and reached home at a late hour, worn out with fatigue.

I passed a sleepless night. My first care the following morning was to devise some means of discovering the man in the gray cloak. Perhaps I might succeed in finding him, and how fortunate if he should be as ill satisfied with his bargain as I was with mine!

I desired Bendel to be sent for, who seemed to possess some tact and ability. I minutely described to him the individual who possessed a treasure without which life itself was rendered a burden to me. I mentioned the time and the place at which I had seen him, named all the persons present, and gave him full particulars.

He departed, and returned late and melancholy. None of Mr. John's servants, none of his guests (and Bendel had spoken to them all), had

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the slightest recollection of the man in the gray cloak. The new telescope was still there, but no one knew how it had come, and the tent and Turkey carpet were still stretched out on the hill. The servants boasted of their master's wealth; but no one seemed to know by what means he had become possessed of these newly acquired luxuries.

Such was the information I gained from Bendel's account; but, in spite of this unsatisfactory result, his zeal and prudence deserved and received my commendation. In a gloomy mood, I made him a sign to withdraw.

"I have, sir," he said, "a message to deliver which I received early this morning from a person at the gate, as I was proceeding to execute the commission in which I have so unfortunately failed. The man's words were these: 'Tell your master, Peter Schlemihl, he will not see me here again. I am about to cross the sea; a favourable wind now calls all the passengers on board; but, in a year and a day hence, I shall have the honour of paying him a visit. Then, in all probability, I shall have a proposal to make to him of a very agreeable nature. Commend me to him most respectfully, with many thanks.' I asked his name, but he said you would remember him."

"What sort of a person was he?" cried I, in great emotion; and Bendel described the man in the gray coat, feature by feature, word for word—in short, the very individual in search of

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whom he had been sent. "How unfortunate!" cried I bitterly; "it was the gray man himself!" Scales, as it were, fell from Bendel's eyes. "Yes, it was he," cried he, "undoubtedly it was he; and fool, madman, that I was, I did not recognise him—I did not, and have betrayed my master!" He then broke out into a torrent of self-reproach; and his distress really excited my compassion. I endeavoured to console him, repeatedly assuring him that I entertained no doubt of his fidelity, and I immediately despatched him to the wharf, to discover, if possible, some trace of the extraordinary being. But on that very morning many vessels which had been detained in port by contrary winds had set sail, all bound to different parts of the globe; and thus the gray man had utterly disappeared.

II

SOLE depository of my fearful secret, I trembled before the meanest of my attendants, whom, at the same time, I envied; for he possessed a shadow and could venture to go out in the day-time, while I shut myself up in my room day and night, and indulged in all the bitterness of grief.

One individual, however, was daily pining away before my eyes—my faithful Bendel, who was the victim of silent self-reproach, tormenting himself with the idea that he had betrayed the confidence reposed in him by a good master,

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in failing to recognise the individual in quest of whom he had been sent, and with whom he had been led to believe that my melancholy fate was closely connected. Still, I had nothing to accuse him of, as I recognised in the occurrence the mysterious character of the unknown.

In order to leave no means untried, I one day despatched Bendel with a costly ring to the most celebrated artist in the town, desiring him to wait upon me. He came. Dismissing the attendants, I secured the door, placing myself opposite to him, and, after extolling his art, with a heavy heart came to the point, first enjoining the strictest secrecy upon him.

"For a person," said I, "who most unfortunately has lost his shadow, could you paint a false one?"

"Do you speak of the natural shadow?"

"Precisely so."

"But," he asked, "by what awkward negligence can a man have lost his shadow?"

"How it occurred," I answered, "is of no consequence; but it was in this manner" (and here I uttered an unblushing falsehood): "he was travelling in Russia last winter, and one bitterly cold day it froze so hard that his shadow remained fixed to the ground."

"The false shadow that I might paint," said the artist, "would be liable to be lost on the slightest movement, particularly in a person who, from your account, cares so little about his shadow. A person without a shadow should

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keep out of the sun; that is the only safe and rational plan."

He rose and took his leave, casting so penetrating a look at me that I shrunk from it. I sank back in my chair, and hid my face in my hands.

My mode of life thenceforth became somewhat different. It is incredible with what provident foresight Bendel contrived to conceal my deficiency. Everywhere he was before me and with me, providing against every contingency, and, in cases of unlooked-for danger, flying to shield me with his own shadow, for he was taller and stouter than myself. Thus I once more ventured among mankind, and began to take a part in worldly affairs. I was compelled, indeed, to affect certain peculiarities and whims; but in a rich man they seem only appropriate, and, so long as the truth was kept concealed, I enjoyed all the honour and respect that gold could procure.

I now looked forward with more composure to the promised visit of the mysterious unknown at the expiration of the year and a day.

Even the lovely Fanny, whom I again met in several places, without her seeming to recollect that she had ever seen me before, bestowed some notice on me; for wit and understanding were mine in abundance now. When I spoke, I was listened to; and I was at a loss to know how I had so easily acquired the art of commanding attention, and giving tone to the conversation.

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The impression which I perceived I had made upon this fair one completely turned my brain; and this was just what she wished. After that, I pursued her with infinite pains through every obstacle. My vanity was only intent on exciting hers to make a conquest of me; but although the intoxication disturbed my head, it failed to make the least impression on my heart.

One beautiful evening I had, according to my usual custom, assembled a party in a garden, and was walking arm-in-arm with Fanny at a little distance from the rest of the company, and pouring into her ear the usual well-turned phrases, while she was demurely gazing on vacancy, and now and then gently returning the pressure of my hand. The moon suddenly emerged from behind a cloud at our back. Fanny perceived only her own shadow before us. She started, looked at me with terror, and then again on the ground, in search of my shadow. All that was passing in her mind was so strangely depicted in her countenance that I should have burst into a loud fit of laughter had I not suddenly felt my blood run cold within me. I suffered her to fall from my arm in a fainting fit, shot with the rapidity of an arrow through the astonished guests, reached the gate, threw myself into the first conveyance I met with, and returned to the town, where this time, unfortunately, I had left the wary Bendel. He was alarmed on seeing me; but one word explained everything. Post-horses were immediately pro-

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cured. I took with me none of my servants, one cunning knave only excepted, called Rascal, who, by his adroitness, had become very useful to me, and who at present knew nothing of what had occurred. I travelled thirty leagues that night, having left Bendel behind to discharge my servants, pay my debts, and bring me all that was necessary.

When he came up with me next day, I threw myself into his arms, vowing to avoid such follies and to be more careful for the future.

We pursued our journey uninterruptedly over the mountainous frontier; and not until I had placed this lofty barrier between myself and the before-mentioned unlucky town was I persuaded to recruit myself, after my fatigues, in a little-frequented watering-place.

In this watering-place I acted a heroic character, badly studied; and being a novice on such a stage, I forgot my part before a pair of lovely blue eyes.

All possible means were used by the infatuated parents to conclude the match. Discovery put an end to my usual artifices.

The powerful emotions which once swelled my bosom seem now in the retrospect to be poor and insipid—nay, even terrible to me.

Alas, Minna! as I wept for thee the day I lost thee, so do I now weep that I can no longer retrace thine image in my soul.

Am I, then, so far advanced into the vale of years? O fatal effects of maturity! would that

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I could feel one throb, one emotion of former days of enchantment—alas, not one! A solitary being, tossed on the wild ocean of life, long is it since I drained thine enchanted cup to the dregs!

But to return to my narrative. I had sent Bendel to the little town with plenty of money to procure me a suitable habitation. He spent my gold profusely; and, as he expressed himself rather reservedly concerning his distinguished master (for I did not wish to be named), the good people began to form rather extraordinary conjectures.

As soon as my house was ready for my reception, Bendel returned to conduct me to it. We set out on our journey. About a league from the town, on a sunny plain, we were stopped by a crowd of people, arrayed in holiday attire for some festival. The carriage stopped. Music, bells, cannon, were heard; loud acclamations rang through the air.

Before the carriage now appeared in white dresses a chorus of maidens, all of extraordinary beauty; but one of them shone in resplendent loveliness, and eclipsed the rest as the sun eclipses the stars of night. She advanced from the midst of her companions, and, with a lofty yet winning air, blushinglly knelt before me, presenting on a silken cushion a wreath composed of laurel, olive, and roses, and saying something respecting majesty, love, honour, and the like, which I could not comprehend. But the sweet

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and silvery magic of her tones intoxicated my senses and my whole soul: it seemed as if some heavenly apparition were hovering over me. The chorus now began to sing the praises of a good sovereign and the happiness of his subjects. All this, dear Chamisso, took place in the sun: she was kneeling two steps from me, and I, without a shadow, could not dart to her, nor fall on my knees before the angelic being. Oh, what would I not now have given for a shadow! To conceal my shame, agony, and despair, I buried myself in the recesses of the carriage. Bendel at last thought of an expedient; he jumped out of the carriage. I called him back, and gave him out of the casket I had by me a rich diamond coronet, which had been intended for the lovely Fanny.

He stepped forward, and spoke in the name of his master, who, he said, was overwhelmed by so many demonstrations of respect, which he really could not accept as an honour—there must be some error; nevertheless, he begged to express his thanks for the good-will of the worthy townspeople. In the meantime, Bendel had taken the wreath from the cushion, and laid the brilliant crown in its place. He then respectfully raised the lovely girl from the ground, and, at a sign, the clergy, magistrates, and all the deputations withdrew. The crowd separated to allow the horses to pass, and we pursued our way to the town at full gallop, through arches ornamented with flowers and branches of laurel. Salvos of

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artillery again were heard. The carriage stopped at my gate; I hastened through the crowd which curiosity had attracted to witness my arrival. Enthusiastic shouts resounded under my windows, from whence I showered gold amidst the people; and in the evening the whole town was illuminated. Still all remained a mystery to me, and I could not imagine for whom I had been taken. I sent Rascal out to make inquiry; he soon obtained intelligence that the good King of Prussia was travelling through the country under the name of some count; that my *aide-de-camp* had been recognised, and that he had divulged the secret; that, on acquiring the certainty that I would enter their town, the people's joy had known no bounds. However, as they perceived I was determined on preserving the strictest *incognito*, they felt how wrong they had been in too importunately seeking to withdraw the veil; but I had received them so condescendingly and so graciously that they were sure I would forgive them. The whole affair was such capital entertainment to the unprincipled Rascal that he did his best to confirm the good people in their belief, while affecting to reprove them. He gave me a very comical account of the matter, and, seeing that I was amused by it, actually endeavoured to make a virtue of his impudence.

Shall I own the truth? My vanity was flattered by having been mistaken for our revered sovereign. I ordered a banquet to be got ready

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for the following evening, under the trees before my house, and invited the whole town. The mysterious power of my purse, Bendel's exertions, and Rascal's ready invention, made the shortness of the time seem as nothing.

The guests arrived, and were presented to me. The word *majesty* was now dropped, but with the deepest respect and humility I was addressed as the *count*. What could I do? I accepted the title, and from that moment I was known as Count Peter. In the midst of all this festivity, my soul pined for one individual. She came late—she who was the empress of the scene, and wore the emblem of sovereignty on her brow.

She modestly accompanied her parents, and seemed unconscious of her transcendent beauty.

The Ranger of the Forests, his wife and daughter, were presented to me. I was at no loss to make myself agreeable to the parents, but before the daughter I stood like a guilty schoolboy, incapable of speaking a single word.

At length I hesitatingly entreated her to honour my banquet by presiding at it—an office for which her rare endowments pointed her out as admirably fitted. With a blush and an expressive glance, she entreated to be excused; but, in still greater confusion than herself, I respectfully begged her to accept the homage of the first and most devoted of her subjects; and one glance of the count was the same as a command

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to the guests, who vied with one another in acting up to the spirit of the noble host.

In her person majesty, innocence, and grace, in union with beauty, presided over this joyous banquet. Minna's happy parents were elated by the honours conferred upon their child. As for me, I abandoned myself to all the intoxication of delight: I sent for all the jewels, pearls, and precious stones still left to me—the product of my fatal wealth—and, filling two vases, I placed them on the table, in the name of the Queen of the banquet, to be divided among her companions and the remainder of the ladies.

I ordered gold in the meantime to be showered down without ceasing among the happy multitude.

Next morning, Bendel told me in confidence that the suspicions he had long entertained of Rascal's honesty were now reduced to a certainty; he had embezzled many bags of gold the day before.

"Never mind," said I; "let him enjoy his paltry booty. *I* like to spend it; why should not he? Yesterday he, and all the newly engaged servants whom you had hired, served me honourably, and cheerfully assisted me to enjoy the banquet."

No more was said on the subject. Rascal remained at the head of my domestics. Bendel was my friend and confidant; he had by this time become accustomed to look upon my wealth as inexhaustible, without seeking to inquire into

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its source. He entered into all my schemes, and effectually assisted me in devising methods of spending my money.

The magnificence of my banquet, and my deportment on the occasion, had but strengthened the credulous townspeople in their previous belief.

It appeared soon after, from accounts in the newspapers, that the whole history of the King of Prussia's fictitious journey originated in mere idle report. But a king I was, and a king I must remain by all means—and one of the richest and most royal, although people were at a loss to know where my country was situated. Meanwhile, however, I remained simply Count Peter.

In the midst of my really princely magnificence and profusion, which carried all before it, my own style of living was very simple and retired. I had made it a point to observe the strictest precaution; and with the exception of Bendel no one was permitted, on any pretence whatever, to enter my private apartment. As long as the sun shone, I remained shut up with him; the Count was then said to be deeply occupied in his closet. The numerous couriers whom I kept in constant attendance about matters of no importance were supposed to be the bearers of my despatches. I received company only in the evening under the trees of my garden, or in my saloons, after Bendel's assurance of their being carefully lighted.

Minna was in truth an amiable and excellent

maiden; her whole soul was wrapped up in me, and in her lowly thoughts of herself she could not imagine how she had deserved a single thought from me. She returned love for love with all the full and youthful fervour of an innocent heart; her love was a true woman's love, with all the devotion and total absence of selfishness which is found only in woman; she lived but in me, her whole soul being bound up in mine, regardless of what her own fate might be.

At one moment I would resolve to confess all to her; then I would determine to fly forever; then I would break out into a flood of bitter tears, and consult Bendel as to the means of meeting her again in the forester's garden.

At times I flattered myself with great hopes from the approaching visit of the unknown, but then wept again as I saw how it must end in disappointment. I had made a calculation of the day fixed on by the fearful being for our interview; for he had said in a year and a day, and I depended on his word.

The parents were worthy old people, devoted to their only child; and our mutual affection was a circumstance so overwhelming that they knew not how to act. They had never dreamed for a moment that the *Count* could bestow a thought on their daughter; but such was the case—he loved and was beloved. The pride of the mother might not have led her to consider such an alliance quite impossible, but so extravagant an idea had never entered the contempla-

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tion of the sounder judgment of the old man. Both were satisfied of the sincerity of my love, and could but send up prayers to Heaven for the happiness of their child.

To her I declared that I was not what I seemed—that although a rich, I was an unspeakably miserable, man—that a curse was on me, which must remain a secret, although the only one between us—yet that I was not without a hope of its being removed—that this poisoned every hour of my life—that I should plunge her with me into the abyss—her, the light and joy, the very soul of my existence. Then she wept because I was unhappy. Oh! Minna was all love and tenderness. To save me one tear, she would gladly have sacrificed her life. Yet she was far from comprehending the full meaning of my words. She still looked upon me as some proscribed prince or illustrious exile; and her vivid imagination had invested her lover with every lofty attribute.

One day I said to her, "Minna, the last day of next month will decide my fate, and perhaps change it for the better; if not, I would sooner die than render you miserable."

She laid her head on my shoulder to conceal her tears. "Should thy fate be changed," she said, "I only wish to know that thou art happy; if thy condition is an unhappy one, I will share it with thee, and assist thee to support it."

"Minna, Minna!" I exclaimed, "recall those rash words—those mad words which have es-

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caped thy lips! Didst thou know the misery and curse—didst thou know who—what—thy lover—— Seest thou not, my Minna, this convulsive shuddering which thrills my whole frame, and that there is a secret in my breast which you cannot penetrate?" She sank sobbing at my feet, and renewed her vows.

Next evening I went again to the forester's garden. I had wrapped myself closely up in my cloak, slouched my hat over my eyes, and advanced toward Minna. As she raised her head and looked at me, she started involuntarily. The apparition of that dreadful night in which I had been seen without a shadow was now standing distinctly before me—it was she herself. Had she recognised me? She was silent and thoughtful. I felt an oppressive load at my heart. I rose from my seat. She laid her head on my shoulder, still silent and in tears. I went away.

I now found her frequently weeping. I became more and more melancholy. Her parents were happy beyond expression. The eventful day approached, threatening and heavy, like a thundercloud. All the evening preceding it, I could scarcely breathe. I had carefully filled a large chest with gold, and sat down in sheer despair to await the appointed time—the twelfth hour.

It struck. I remained with my eyes fixed on the hand of the clock, counting the seconds—the minutes—which pierced my heart like daggers.

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I started at every sound. Finally, daylight appeared. The leaden hours went on. Morning—evening—night came. Hope was fast fading away as the hand advanced. It struck eleven—no one appeared; the last minutes, at length, the first and last stroke of the twelfth hour died away. I sank back in my bed in an agony of tears. In the morning I should, shadowless as I was, claim the hand of my beloved Minna. Toward daybreak a heavy sleep closed my eyes.

III

It was yet early, when I was suddenly awakened by voices in hot dispute in my antechamber. I listened. Bendel was forbidding Rascal to enter my room, but he swore he would receive no orders from his equals, and insisted on forcing his way. The faithful Bendel reminded him that, if such words reached his master's ears, he would turn him out of an excellent place. Rascal threatened to strike him if he persisted in refusing his entrance.

By this time, having half dressed myself, I angrily threw open the door, and addressing myself to Rascal, inquired what he meant by such disgraceful conduct. He drew back a couple of steps, and coolly answered: "Count Peter, may I beg most respectfully that you will favour me with a sight of your shadow? The sun is now shining brightly in the court below."

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I stood as if struck by a thunderbolt, and for some time was unable to speak. At last I asked him how a servant could dare to behave so toward his master. He interrupted me by saying, quite coolly: "A servant may be a very honourable man, and unwilling to serve a shadowless master. I request my dismissal."

I felt that I must adopt a softer tone, and replied, "But, Rascal, my good fellow, who can have put such strange ideas into your head? How can you imagine——"

He again interrupted me in the same tone—"People say you have no shadow. In short, let me see your shadow, or give me my dismissal."

Bendel, pale and trembling, but more collected than myself, made a sign to me. I had recourse to the all-powerful influence of gold. But even gold had lost its power. Rascal threw it at my feet. "From a shadowless man," he said, "I will take nothing."

Turning his back upon me, and putting on his hat, he then slowly left the room, whistling a tune. I stood, with Bendel, as if petrified, gazing after him.

With a deep sigh and a heavy heart, I now prepared to keep my engagement, and to appear in the forester's garden like a criminal before his judge. I entered by the shady arbour, which had received the name of Count Peter's arbour, where we had appointed to meet. The mother advanced with a cheerful air; Minna sat fair and beautiful as the early snow of autumn

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reposing on the departing flowers, soon to be dissolved and lost in the cold stream.

The ranger, with a written paper in his hand, was walking up and down in an agitated manner, and struggling to suppress his feelings—his usually unmoved countenance being flushed one moment, and the next perfectly pale. He came forward as I entered, and in a faltering voice requested an interview with me. The path by which I followed him led to an open spot in the garden, where the sun was shining. I sat down. A long silence ensued, which even the good mother herself did not venture to break. The ranger, in an agitated manner, paced up and down with unequal steps. At last he stood still, and glancing over the paper he held in his hand, he said, addressing me with a penetrating look, "Count Peter, do you know one Peter Schle-mihl?" I was silent.

"A man," he continued, "of excellent character and extraordinary endowments."

He paused for an answer.

"And supposing I myself were that very man?" I queried.

"You!" he exclaimed passionately; "he has lost his shadow!"

"Oh, my suspicion is true!" cried Minna; "I have long known it—he has no shadow!" And she threw herself into her mother's arms, who, convulsively clasping her to her bosom, reproached her for having, to her hurt, so long kept such a secret. But, like the fabled Aræ

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thusa, her tears, as from a fountain, flowed the more abundantly, and her sobs increased at my approach.

"And so," said the ranger fiercely, "you have not scrupled, with unparalleled shamelessness, to deceive both her and me. You pretended to love her, forsooth!—her whom you have reduced to the state in which you now see her. See how she weeps!—oh, shocking, shocking!"

By this time I had lost all presence of mind, and answered confusedly, "After all, it is but a shadow, a mere shadow, which a man can do very well without; and, really, it is not worth while to make all this fuss about such a trifle." Feeling the groundlessness of what I was saying, I ceased, and no one vouchsafed a reply. At last I added, "What is lost to-day may be found to-morrow."

"Be pleased, sir," continued the ranger, in great wrath—"be pleased to explain how you have lost your shadow."

Here again an excuse was ready: "A boor of a fellow," said I, "one day trod so rudely on my shadow that he tore a large hole in it. I sent it to be repaired—for gold can do wonders—and yesterday I expected it home again."

"Very well," answered the ranger. "You are a suitor for my daughter's hand, and so are others. As a father, I am bound to provide for her. I will give you three days to seek your shadow. Return to me in the course of that time with a well-fitted shadow, and you shall re-

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ceive a hearty welcome; otherwise, on the fourth day—remember, on the fourth day—my daughter becomes the wife of another.”

I attempted to say a word to Minna; but, sobbing more violently, she clung still closer to her mother, who made a sign for me to withdraw. I obeyed—and now the world seemed shut out from me forever.

Having escaped from the affectionate care of Bendel, I wandered wildly through the neighbouring woods and meadows. Drops of anguish fell from my brow; deep groans burst from my bosom; frenzied despair raged within me.

I knew not how long this had lasted, when I felt myself seized by the sleeve on a sunny heath. I stopped and, looking up, beheld the gray-coated man, who appeared to have run himself out of breath in pursuing me. He immediately began: “I had,” said he, “appointed this day; but your impatience anticipated it. All, however, may yet be right. Take my advice—redeem your shadow, which is at your command, and return immediately to the ranger’s garden, where you will be well received, and all the past will seem a mere joke. As for Rascal—who has betrayed you in order to pay his addresses to Minna—leave him to me; he is a fit subject for me.”

I stood like one in a dream. “This day?” I considered again. He was right—I had made a mistake of a day. I felt in my bosom for the

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purse. He perceived my intention, and drew back.

"No, Count Peter, the purse is in good hands—pray keep it." I gazed at him with looks of astonishment and inquiry. "I beg only a trifle as a token of remembrance. Be so good as to sign this memorandum." On the parchment, which he held out to me, were these words: "By virtue of these presents, to which I have appended my signature, I hereby bequeath my soul to the holder, after its natural separation from my body."

I gazed in mute astonishment alternately at the paper and at the gray unknown. In the meantime, he had dipped a new pen in a drop of blood which was issuing from a scratch in my hand just made by a thorn. He presented it to me. "Who are you?" at last I exclaimed. "What can it signify?" he answered; "do you not perceive who I am? A poor devil—a sort of scholar and philosopher, who obtains but poor thanks from his friends for his admirable arts, and whose only amusement on earth consists in his small experiments. But just sign this; to the right, exactly below—Peter Schlemihl."

I shook my head, and replied, "Excuse me, sir; I cannot sign that."

"Cannot!" he exclaimed; "and why not?"

"Because it appears to me a hazardous thing to exchange my soul for my shadow."

"Hazardous!" he exclaimed, bursting into a

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loud laugh. "And, pray, may I be allowed to inquire what sort of a thing your soul is?—have you ever seen it?—and what do you mean to do with it after your death? You ought to think yourself fortunate in meeting with a customer who, during your life, in exchange for this infinitely minute quantity, this galvanic principle, this polarised agency, or whatever other foolish name you may give it, is willing to give you something substantial—in a word, your own identical shadow, by virtue of which you will obtain your beloved Minna, and arrive at the accomplishment of all your wishes. Or do you prefer giving up the poor young girl to the power of that contemptible scoundrel, Rascal? Nay, you shall behold her with your own eyes. Come here, I will lend you a magic cap (he drew something out of his pocket), and we will enter the ranger's garden unseen."

But I considered the past as irrevocable, my own misery as inevitable, and, turning to the gray man, I said: "I have exchanged my shadow for this very extraordinary purse, and I have sufficiently repented it. For Heaven's sake, let the transaction be declared null and void!" He shook his head, while his countenance assumed an expression of the most sinister cast. I continued: "I will make no exchange whatever, even for the sake of my shadow, nor will I sign the paper. As for the incognito visit you propose, it would afford you far more entertainment than it could possibly give me. Accept

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my excuses, therefore, and, since it must be so, let us part."

"I am sorry, Mr. Schlemihl, that you thus obstinately persist in rejecting my friendly offer. Perhaps another time I may be more fortunate. Farewell! May we shortly meet again! But, *à propos*, allow me to show you that I do not undervalue my purchase, but preserve it carefully."

So saying, he drew my shadow out of his pocket. Shaking out its folds cleverly, he stretched it out at his feet in the sun—so that he stood between two obedient shadows, his own and mine, which was compelled to follow and comply with his every movement.

On again beholding my poor shadow after so long a separation, and seeing it degraded to so vile a bondage at the very time that I was so terribly in want of it, my heart was ready to burst, and I wept bitterly. The detested wretch stood exulting over his prey, and unblushingly renewed his proposal. "One stroke of your pen, and the unhappy Minna is rescued from the clutches of the villain Rascal, and transferred to the arms of the high-born Count Peter—merely a stroke of your pen!"

My tears broke out with renewed violence; but I turned away from him, and made a sign for him to be gone.

Alone on the wild heath, I disburdened my heart of an insupportable load by giving free vent to my tears. But I saw no bounds, no

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relief, to my surpassing wretchedness. Thus I passed three melancholy days.

On the morning of the fourth I found myself on a sandy plain, basking in the rays of the sun, and sitting on a fragment of rock; for it was sweet to enjoy the genial warmth of which I had been so long deprived. Despair still preyed on my heart. Suddenly a slight sound startled me; I looked round, prepared to fly, but saw no one. On the sunlit sand before me flitted the shadow of a man not unlike my own; and, wandering about alone, it seemed to have lost its master. This sight powerfully excited me. "Shadow!" thought I, "art thou in search of thy master? In me thou shalt find him." And I sprang forward to seize it, fancying that, could I succeed in treading so exactly in its traces as to step in its footmarks, it would attach itself to me, and in time become accustomed to me, and follow all my movements.

The shadow, as I moved, took to flight, and I began a hot chase after the airy fugitive, excited solely by the hope of being delivered from my present dreadful situation: the bare idea inspired me with fresh strength and vigour.

The shadow fled toward a distant wood, among whose shades I must necessarily have lost it. Seeing this, my heart beat wild with fright; my ardour increased, and lent wings to my speed. I was evidently gaining on the shadow—I came nearer and nearer—I was within reach of it, when it suddenly stopped and turned toward

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me. Like a lion darting on its prey, I made a powerful spring, and fell unexpectedly upon a hard substance. Then followed, from an invisible hand, the most terrible blows in the ribs that any one ever received. The effect of my terror made me endeavour convulsively to strike and grasp at the unseen object before me. The rapidity of my motions brought me to the ground, where I found myself lying stretched out with a man under me, whom I held tight, and who now became visible.

The whole affair was now manifest. The man had undoubtedly possessed the bird's nest which communicates its charm of invisibility to its possessor, though not equally so to his shadow; and this nest he had thrown away. I looked all round, and soon discovered the shadow of this invisible nest. I sprang toward it, and was fortunate enough to seize the precious booty, and immediately became invisible.

Ardently desiring to return to the ranger's, anxiety hastened my steps. Unseen, I met some peasants coming from the town; they were talking of me, of Rascal, and of the ranger. I would not stay to listen to their conversation, but proceeded on. My bosom thrilled with expectation as I entered the ranger's garden. At this moment I heard something like a hollow laugh which caused me involuntarily to shudder.

Suddenly my head was, as it were, enveloped in a mist. I looked up, and oh, horror! the gray-coated man was at my side, peering into

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my face with a satanic grin. He had extended over my head the magic cap that he wore. His shadow and my own were lying together at his feet in perfect amity. He kept twirling in his hand the well-known parchment with an air of indifference; and while the ranger, absorbed in thought and intent upon his paper, paced up and down the arbour, my tormentor confidentially leaned toward me, and whispered: "So, Mr. Schlemihl, you have at length accepted my invitation; and here we sit, 'two heads under one hood,' as the saying is. Well, well! all in good time. But now you can return me my bird's nest—you have no further use for it, and I am sure you are too honourable a man to withhold it from me. No need of thanks, I assure you; I had infinite pleasure in lending it to you. I am still of opinion that you ought to redeem your shadow and claim your bride (for it is yet time); and as to Rascal, he shall dangle at a rope's end—no difficult matter, so long as we can find a bit. As a mark of friendship, I will give you my cap into the bargain."

The mother now came out with Minna. Her father took her hand, and addressed her in the most affectionate manner:

"My own dear, good child—my Minna—will act reasonably, and not afflict her poor old father, who only wishes to make her happy. A suitor has appeared for you in the person of a man who does not fear the sun—an honourable man—no prince indeed, but a man worth millions of

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ducats, a man, too, who will make my dear child happy—nay, do not oppose me—be my own good, dutiful child—allow your loving father to provide for you; dry up those tears. Promise to bestow your hand on Mr. Rascal. Speak, my child; will you not?”

Minna could scarcely summon strength to reply that she had now no longer any hopes or desires on earth, and that she was entirely at her father's disposal. Rascal was, therefore, immediately sent for, and entered with his usual forwardness; but Minna in the meantime had swooned away.

My detested companion looked at me indignantly, and whispered, “Can you endure this? Have you no blood in your veins?” He instantly pricked my finger, which bled. “Yes, positively,” he exclaimed, “you have some blood left! Come, sign.” The parchment and pen were in my hand——

IV

I KNOW not whether to ascribe it to excitement of mind, exhaustion of physical strength (for, during the last few days, I had scarcely tasted anything), or the antipathy I felt to the society of my fiendish companion, but, just as I was about to sign the fatal paper, I fell into a deep swoon, and remained for a long time as if dead. The first sounds which greeted my ear on recovering my consciousness were those of

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cursing and imprecation. I opened my eyes—it was dusk; my hateful companion was overwhelming me with reproaches: "Is not this behaving like an old woman? Come, rise up, and finish quickly what you were going to do. Or perhaps you have changed your mind, and prefer to lie there groaning?"

He continued unceasingly in the same tone, uttering constant sarcasms about gold and shadows, till I was completely bewildered.

To fly from him was impossible. I wended my way through the empty streets toward my own house, which I could scarcely recognise—the windows were broken to pieces, no light was visible, the doors were shut, and the bustle of domestics had ceased. My companion burst into a loud laugh. "Yes, yes," said he, "you see the state of things: however, you will find your friend Bendel at home. He will have a fine story to tell! So I wish you a very good night—may we shortly meet again!"

I had repeatedly rung the bell, when at last a light appeared, and Bendel inquired from within who was there. The poor fellow could scarcely contain himself at the sound of my voice. The door flew open, and we were locked in each other's arms. I found him sadly changed; he was looking ill and feeble. I, too, was altered; my hair had become quite gray. He conducted me through the desolate apartments to an inner room, which had escaped the general wreck. After partaking of some

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refreshment, we seated ourselves. He then told me how the mob, at Rascal's instigation, had assembled violently before the house, broken the windows, and, by all sorts of excesses, completely satiated their fury. Thus had they treated their benefactor. My servants had fled in all directions. The police had banished me from the town as a suspicious character, and granted me an interval of twenty-four hours to leave the district. Bendel added many particulars respecting Rascal's wealth and marriage. This villain, it seems—who was the author of all the measures taken against me—became possessed of my secret nearly from the beginning, and, tempted by the love of money, had supplied himself with a key to my chest, and from that time had been laying the foundation of his present wealth. Bendel related all this with many tears, and wept for joy that I was once more safely restored to him, after all his fears and anxieties for me. In me, however, such a state of things only awoke despair.

My dreadful fate now stared me in the face in all its gigantic and unchangeable horror. The source of tears was exhausted within me; no groans escaped my breast; but, with cool indifference, I bared my unprotected head to the blast. "Bendel," said I, "you know my fate; this heavy visitation is a punishment for my early sins: but as for thee, my innocent friend, I can no longer permit thee to share my destiny. I will depart this very night—saddle

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me a horse—I will set out alone. Remain here, Bendel—I insist upon it: there must be some chests of gold still left in the house—take them; they are thine. I shall be a restless and solitary wanderer on the face of the earth; but, should better days arise, and fortune once more smile propitiously on me, then I will not forget thy steady fidelity; for, in hours of deep distress, thy faithful bosom has been the depository of my sorrows.” With a bursting heart, the worthy Bendel prepared to obey this last command of his master; for I was deaf to all his arguments and blind to his tears. My horse was brought—I pressed my weeping friend to my bosom—threw myself into the saddle, and, under the friendly shades of night, quitted this sepulchre of my existence, indifferent which road my horse should take. Henceforth, on this side the grave, I had neither wishes, hopes, nor fears.

After a short time I was joined by a traveller on foot, who, after walking for a while by the side of my horse, observed that, as we both seemed to be travelling the same road, he would beg my permission to lay his cloak on the horse’s back behind me, to which I silently assented. He thanked me with easy politeness for this trifling favour, praised my horse, and then took occasion to extol the happiness and the power of the rich, and fell, I scarcely know how, into a sort of conversation with himself, in which I merely acted the part of listener. He unfolded

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his views of human life and of the world, and, touching on metaphysics, demanded an answer from that cloudy science to the question of questions—the answer that should solve all mysteries. He deduced one problem from another in a very lucid manner, and then proceeded to their solution. I listened with pleasure to this eloquently gifted man, who diverted my attention from my own sorrows to the speaker; and he would have secured my entire acquiescence if he had appealed to my heart as well as to my judgment.

In the meantime the hours had passed away, and morning had already dawned imperceptibly in the horizon. Looking up, I shuddered as I beheld in the east all those splendid hues that announce the rising sun. At this hour, when all natural shadows are seen in their full proportions, not a fence or a shelter of any kind could I descry in this open country—and I was not alone! I cast a glance at my companion, and shuddered again—it was the man in the gray coat himself! He laughed at my surprise, and, without giving me time to speak, said, “You see, according to the fashion of this world, mutual convenience binds us together for a time; there is plenty of time to think of parting. The road here along the mountain, which perhaps has escaped your notice, is the only one that you can prudently take; into the valley you dare not descend—the path over the mountain would but reconduct you to the town which you have left. My road, too, lies this way. I perceive you

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change colour at the rising sun—I have no objection to letting you have the loan of your shadow during our journey, and in return you may not be indisposed to tolerate my society. You now have no Bendel, but I will act for him. I regret that you are not over-fond of me; that need not, however, prevent you from accepting my poor services. The devil is not so black as he is painted. Yesterday you provoked me, I own; but now that is all forgotten, and you must confess I have succeeded in beguiling the wearisomeness of your journey. Come, take your shadow, and make a trial of it."

The sun had risen, and we were meeting with passengers; so I reluctantly assented. With a smile, he immediately let my shadow glide down to the ground, and I beheld it take its place by that of my horse and gaily trot along with me. My feelings were anything but pleasant. I rode through groups of country people, who respectfully made way for the well-mounted stranger. Thus I proceeded, occasionally stealing a side-long glance with a beating heart from my horse at the shadow once more my own, but now, alas! accepted as a loan from a stranger, or rather a fiend. He moved on carelessly at my side, whistling a song. He being on foot, and I on horseback, the temptation to hazard a silly project occurred to me; so, suddenly turning my bridle, I set spurs to my horse, and at full gallop struck into a by-path. My shadow, on the sudden movement of my horse, glided away, and

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stood on the road quietly awaiting the approach of its legal owner. I was obliged to return abashed toward the gray man; who very coolly finished his song, and, with a laugh, set my shadow to rights again, reminding me that it was at my option to have it irrevocably fixed to me, by purchasing it on just and equitable terms. "I hold you," said he, "by the shadow; you seek in vain to get rid of me. A rich man like you requires a shadow, unquestionably; you only are to blame for not having seen this sooner."

I now continued my journey on the same road; every convenience and even luxury of life was mine; I moved about in peace and freedom, for I possessed a shadow, though a borrowed one; and all the respect due to wealth was paid to me. But a deadly disease preyed on my heart. My extraordinary companion never stirred from my side, and tormented me with constant assurances that a day would most certainly come, when, if it were only to get rid of him, I should gladly comply with his terms, and redeem my shadow. I stood in awe of him; I had placed myself in his power. Since he had effected my return to the pleasures of the world, which I had resolved to shun, he had the perfect mastery of me. His eloquence was irresistible, and at times I almost thought he was in the right. On one point, nevertheless, I was immovable: since I had sacrificed my love for Minna, and thereby blighted the happiness of

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my whole life, I would not now, for all the shadows in the universe, be induced to sign away my soul to this being.

One day we were sitting by the entrance of a cavern, much visited by strangers who ascended the mountain: the rushing noise of a subterranean torrent resounded from the fathomless abyss, the depths of which exceeded all calculation. He was, according to his favourite custom, employing all the powers of his lavish fancy, and all the charm of the most brilliant colouring, to depict to me what I might effect in the world by virtue of my purse, when once I had recovered my shadow.

"You seem to forget," said I, "that I tolerate your presence only on certain conditions, and that I am to retain perfect freedom of action."

"You have but to command, and I depart," was all his reply.

The threat was familiar to me; I was silent. He then began to fold up my shadow. I turned pale, but allowed him to continue. A long silence ensued, which he was the first to break:

"I will go. Only allow me to inform you how you may at any time recall me whenever you have a mind to see your most humble servant. You have only to shake your purse; the sound of the gold will bring me to you in an instant. In this world, every one consults his own advantage; you see I have thought of yours, and

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clearly confer upon you a new power. Oh, this purse! it would still prove a powerful bond between us, had the moth begun to devour your shadow.—But enough: you hold me by my gold, and may command your servant at any distance. You know that I can be very serviceable to my friends; and that the rich are my peculiar care—this you have observed. As to your shadow, allow me to say you can redeem it on only one condition.”

Recollections of former days came over me; and I hastily asked him whether he had ever obtained Mr. Thomas John’s signature.

He smiled, and said, “It was by no means necessary from so excellent a friend.”

“Where is he? For God’s sake tell me! I insist upon knowing!”

With some hesitation, he put his hand into his pocket, and drew out, by the hair of the head, the altered and pallid form of Mr. John, whose livid lips uttered the awful words, “*Justo judicio Dei, judicatus sum; justo judicio Dei, condemnatus sum*”—“By the just judgment of God, I am judged; by the just judgment of God, I am condemned.” I was horror-struck; and, instantly hurling the jingling purse into the abyss, I exclaimed: “Wretch! in the name of Heaven, I conjure you to be gone! Away from my sight! Never appear before me again!” With a dark expression on his countenance, he arose, and immediately vanished behind the huge rocks which surrounded the place.

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V

I WAS now left alike without gold and without a shadow; but a heavy load was taken from my breast, and I felt cheerful. Had not my Minna been irrecoverably lost to me, or even had I been perfectly free from self-reproach on her account, I felt that happiness might yet have been mine. At present, I was lost in doubt as to my future course. I examined my pockets, and found I had a few gold pieces still left, which I counted with feelings of great satisfaction. I had left my horse at the inn, and was ashamed to return, or, at all events, I must wait till the sun had set, which at present was high in the heavens. I laid myself down under a shady tree, and fell into a peaceful sleep.

When I opened my eyes the sun was visible in the east: I must have slept the whole night. I looked upon this as a warning not to return to the inn, and, resigning myself to Providence, I decided on taking a by-road that led through the wooded declivity of the mountain. I never once cast a glance behind me; nor did it ever occur to me to return, as I might have done, to Bendel, whom I had left in affluence. My present garb was very humble—consisting of an old black coat I had formerly worn at Berlin—and which, by some chance, was the first I had put my hand on before setting out on this journey—a travelling-cap, and an old pair of boots. I

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cut down a knotted stick in memory of the spot, and commenced my pilgrimage.

In the forest I met an aged peasant, who gave me a friendly greeting, and with whom I entered into conversation, requesting, as a traveller desirous of information, some particulars relative to the road, the country, and its inhabitants, the productions of the mountain, and the like. He replied to my various inquiries with readiness and intelligence. At last we reached the bed of a mountain-torrent, which had laid waste a considerable tract of the forest; I inwardly shuddered at the idea of the open sunshine. I suffered the peasant to go before me. In the middle of the very place which I dreaded so much, he suddenly stopped, and turned back to give me an account of this inundation. Instantly perceiving that I had no shadow, he broke off abruptly, and exclaimed, "How is this? You have no shadow!"

"Alas, alas!" said I, "in a long and serious illness, I had the misfortune to lose my hair, my nails, and my shadow. Look, good father, although my hair has grown again, it is quite white, and, at my age, my nails are still very short, and my poor shadow seems to have left me, never to return."

"Ah!" said the old man, shaking his head, "no shadow! that was, indeed, a terrible illness, sir."

But he did not resume his narrative; and, at the very first cross-road we came to, he left me without uttering a syllable. Fresh tears flowed

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from my eyes, and my cheerfulness had fled. With a heavy heart, I travelled on, avoiding all society. I plunged into the deepest shades of the forest; and often, to avoid a sunny tract of country, I waited for hours till every human being had left it, and I could pass it unobserved. In the evenings I took shelter in the villages. I bent my steps to a mine in the mountains, where I hoped to meet with work underground; for aside from the fact that my present situation compelled me to provide for my own support, I felt that only incessant and laborious occupation could divert my mind from dwelling on painful subjects. A few rainy days assisted me materially on my journey; but it was to the no small detriment of my boots, the soles of which were better suited to Count Peter than to the poor foot-traveller. I was soon barefoot, and a new purchase must be made. The following morning I began an earnest search in a market-place, where a fair was being held. I saw in one of the booths new and second-hand boots set out for sale. I was a long time selecting and bargaining; I much wished to have a new pair, but was frightened at the extravagant price, and so was obliged to content myself with a second-hand pair, still pretty good and strong, which the beautiful fair-haired youth who kept the booth handed over to me with a cheerful smile, as he wished me a prosperous journey. I went on, and left the place immediately by the northern gate.

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I was so lost in my own thoughts that I walked along scarcely knowing how or where. I was calculating the chances of my reaching the mine by the evening, and considering how I should introduce myself. I had not gone two hundred paces when I perceived that I was not in the right road. I looked around, and found myself in a wild-looking forest of ancient firs, where, apparently, the stroke of the axe had never been heard. A few steps more brought me amid huge rocks covered with moss and saxifragous plants, between which whole fields of snow and ice were extended. The air was intensely cold. I looked round, and the forest had disappeared behind me; a few steps more, and there was the stillness of death itself. The icy plain on which I stood stretched to an immeasurable distance, and a thick cloud rested upon it; the sun was of a red blood-colour at the verge of the horizon; the cold was insupportable. I could not imagine what had happened to me. The benumbing frost made me quicken my pace. I heard a distant sound of waters; and, at one step more, I stood on the icy shore of some ocean. Innumerable droves of seals hurried past me, and plunged into the waves. I continued my way along this coast, and again met with rocks, plains, birch and fir forests, and yet only a few minutes had elapsed. It was now intensely hot. I looked about, and suddenly found myself amidst some fertile rice-fields and mulberry-trees. Sitting down under their shade, I found

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by my watch that it was just a quarter of an hour since I left the village market. I fancied it was a dream; but no, I was indeed awake, as I felt by the experiment of biting my tongue. I closed my eyes in order to collect my scattered thoughts. Presently I heard unintelligible words uttered in a nasal tone, and I beheld two Chinese, whose Asiatic physiognomies were not to be mistaken, even had their costume not betrayed their origin. They were addressing me in the language and with the salutations of their country. I arose and drew back a couple of steps. They had disappeared; the landscape was entirely changed; the rice-fields had given place to trees and woods. I examined some of the trees and plants around me, and ascertained such of them as I was acquainted with to be productions of the southern part of Asia. I made one step toward a particular tree, and again all was changed. I now moved on like a recruit at drill, taking slow and measured steps, and gazing, with astonished eyes, at the wonderful variety of regions, plains, meadows, mountains, steppes, and sandy deserts which passed in succession before me. I had now no doubt that I had seven-league boots on my feet.

I fell on my knees in silent gratitude, shedding tears of thankfulness, for I now saw clearly what was to be my future condition. Shut out by early sins from all human society, I was offered amends for the privation of Nature herself, whom I had ever loved. The earth was granted

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me as a rich garden; the knowledge of her operations was to be the study and object of my life. Rising, I took a hasty survey of this new field, where I hoped afterward to reap a rich harvest.

I stood on the heights of Thibet: the sun I had lately beheld in the east was now sinking in the west. I traversed Asia from east to west and thence passed into Africa, which I curiously examined at repeated visits in all directions. As I gazed on the ancient pyramids and temples of Egypt I descried, in the sandy deserts near Thebes of the hundred gates, the caves where Christian hermits dwelt of old.

My determination was instantly fixed: here should be my future dwelling. I chose one of the most secluded, but roomy, comfortable, and inaccessible to the jackals.

I stepped over from the pillars of Hercules to Europe; and, having taken a survey of its northern and southern countries, I passed by the north of Asia, on the polar glaciers, to Greenland and America, visiting both parts of this continent; and the winter, which was already at its height in the south, drove me quickly back from Cape Horn to the north. I waited till daylight had risen in the east of Asia, and then, after a short rest, continued my pilgrimage. I followed, in both the Americas, the vast chain of the Andes, once considered the loftiest on our globe. I stepped carefully and slowly from one summit to another, sometimes over snowy

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heights, sometimes over flaming volcanoes, often breathless from fatigue. At last I reached St. Elias's mountain, and sprang over Behring's Straits into Asia; I followed the eastern coast in its various windings, carefully observing which of the neighbouring isles was accessible to me. From the peninsula of Malacca my boots carried me to Sumatra, Java, Bal, and Lombok. I made many attempts—often with danger, and always unsuccessfully—to force my way over the numerous little islands and rocks with which this sea is studded, wishing to find a northwest passage to Borneo and other islands of the Archipelago.

In making a visit to Europe, it was my care to provide myself with the articles of which I stood most in need. First of all a drag, to act on my boots; for I had experienced the inconvenience of these whenever I wished to shorten my steps and examine surrounding objects more fully. A pair of slippers to go over the boots served the purpose effectually; and from that time I carried two pairs about me, because I frequently cast them off from my feet in my botanical investigations, without having time to pick them up when threatened by the approach of lions, men, or hyenas. My excellent watch, owing to the short duration of my movements, was also an admirable chronometer on these occasions. I wanted, besides, a sextant, a few philosophical instruments, and some books. To purchase these things I made several un-

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willing journeys to London and Paris, choosing a time when I could be hid by the favouring clouds. As all my ill-gotten gold was exhausted, I carried over from Africa some ivory, which is there so plentiful, in payment of my purchases—taking care, however, to pick out the smallest teeth, in order not to overburden myself. I had thus soon provided myself with all that I wanted, and now entered on a new mode of life as a student—wandering over the globe—measuring the height of the mountains, and the temperature of the air and of the springs—observing the manners and habits of animals—investigating plants and flowers. From the equator to the pole, and from the new world to the old, I was constantly engaged in repeating and comparing my experiments.

One day, as I was gathering lichens and algæ on the northern coast, with the drag on my boots, a bear suddenly made his appearance, and was stealing toward me round the corner of a rock. After kicking off my slippers, as I thought, I attempted to step across to an island, by means of a rock that projected from the waves in the intermediate space, and that served as a stepping-stone. I reached the rock safely with one foot, but instantly fell into the sea with the other, one of my slippers having inadvertently remained on. The cold was intense, and I escaped this imminent peril at the risk of my life. On coming ashore, I hastened to the Libyan

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sands to dry myself in the sun, but the heat affected my head so much, that, in a fit of illness, I staggered back to the north. In vain I sought relief by change of place—hurrying from east to west, and from west to east—now in climes of the south, now in those of the north; sometimes I rushed into daylight, sometimes into the shades of night. I know not how long this lasted. A burning fever raged in my veins; with extreme anguish, I felt my senses leaving me. Suddenly, by an unlucky accident, I trod upon some one's foot, and in return received a blow that laid me senseless.

On recovering my senses I found myself lying comfortably in a good bed, which, with many other beds, stood in a spacious and handsome apartment. Some one was watching by me; people seemed to be walking from one bed to another; they came to mine, and spoke of me as *Number Twelve*. On the wall, at the foot of my bed—it was no dream, for I distinctly read it—on a black marble tablet was inscribed my name, in large letters of gold:

PETER SCHLEMIHL

Underneath were two rows of letters in smaller characters, which I was too feeble to connect together, and I closed my eyes again.

I now heard something read aloud, in which I distinctly noted the words, "Peter Schlemihl," but could not gather the full meaning. I saw a

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man of benevolent aspect, and a very beautiful female dressed in black, standing near my bed; their countenances were not unknown to me, but in my weak state I could not remember who they were. Some time elapsed, and I began to regain my strength. I was called *Number Twelve*, and, from my long beard, was supposed to be a Jew, but was not the less carefully nursed on that account. No one seemed to perceive that I was destitute of a shadow. My boots, I was assured, together with everything found on me when I was brought here, were in safe keeping, and would be given up to me on my restoration to health. This place was called the SCHLEMIHLIUM. The daily recitation I had heard was an exhortation to pray for Peter Schlemihl as the founder and benefactor of this institution. The benevolent-looking man whom I had seen by my bedside was Bendel; the beautiful lady in black was Minna.

I had been enjoying the advantages of the Schlemihlium without being recognised, learning, further, that I was in Bendel's native town, where he had employed a part of my once unhallowed gold in founding a hospital in my name, under his superintendence, and that its unfortunate inmates daily pronounced blessings on me. Minna had become a widow: an unhappy lawsuit had deprived Rascal of his life, and Minna of the greater part of her property. Her parents were no more, and here she dwelt

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in widowed piety, wholly devoting herself to works of mercy.

One day, as she stood by the side of Number Twelve's bed with Bendel, he said to her, "Noble lady, why expose yourself so frequently to this unhealthy atmosphere? Has fate dealt so harshly with you as to render you desirous of death?"

"By no means, Mr. Bendel," she replied; "since I have wakened from my long dream, all has gone well with me. I now neither wish for death nor fear it, and think on the future and on the past with equal serenity. Do you not also feel an inward satisfaction in thus paying a pious tribute of gratitude and love to your old master and friend?"

"Thanks be to God, I do, noble lady," said he. "Ah, how wonderfully has everything fallen out! How thoughtlessly have we sipped joys and sorrows from the full cup now drained to the last drop; and we might fancy the past a mere prelude to the real scene for which we now wait armed, by experience. How different has been the reality! Yet, let us not regret the past, but rather rejoice that we have not lived in vain. As respects our old friend also, I have a firm hope that it is now better with him than formerly."

"I trust so, too," answered Minna; and, so saying, she passed by me, and they departed.

This conversation made a deep impression on me, and I hesitated whether I should discover

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myself or depart unknown. At last I decided, and, asking for pen and paper, wrote as follows:

"Matters are indeed better with your old friend than formerly. He has repented, and his repentance has led to forgiveness."

I was now able to rise, for I felt much stronger. The keys of a little chest near my bed were given me; in it I found all my effects. I put on my clothes; fastened my botanical case round me—wherein, with delight, I found my northern lichens all safe—put on my boots, and leaving my note on the table, left the gates, and was speedily far advanced on the road to Thebes.

In my home I found everything exactly in the order in which I had left it. I returned by degrees, as my increasing strength allowed me, to my old occupations and usual mode of life, from which I had been kept back a whole year by my fall into the Polar Ocean. And this, dear Chamisso, is the life I am still leading.

So far as my boots would carry me, I have observed and studied our globe and its conformation, its mountains and temperature, the atmosphere in its various changes, the influences of the magnetic power; in fact, I have studied all living creation—and most especially the kingdom of plants—more profoundly than any one of our race. I have arranged all the facts in proper order, to the best of my ability, in different works. The consequences deducible from these facts, and my views respecting them, I have succinctly recorded in various essays and

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dissertations. I have settled the geography of the interior of Africa and of the Arctic regions, of the interior of Asia and of its eastern coast. My *Historia stirpium plantarum utriusque orbis* is an extensive fragment of my *Systema naturæ*. Besides increasing the number of our known species by more than a third, I have also contributed somewhat to the natural system of plants and to a knowledge of their geography. I am now deeply engaged on my *Fauna*, and shall take care to have my manuscripts sent to the University of Berlin before my decease.

I have selected thee, my dear Chamisso, to be the guardian of my wonderful history, thinking that, when I have left this world, it may afford valuable instruction to the living. As for thee, Chamisso, if thou wouldst live amongst thy fellow-creatures, learn to value thy shadow more than gold; if thou wouldst only live to thyself and thy nobler part—in this thou needest no counsel.

THE MINISTER'S BLACK VEIL

BY

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

THE sexton stood in the porch of Milford meeting-house, pulling busily at the bell-rope. The old people of the village came stooping along the street. Children, with bright faces, tripped merrily beside their parents, or mimicked a graver gait, in the conscious dignity of their Sunday clothes. Spruce bachelors looked side-long at the pretty maidens, and fancied that the Sabbath sunshine made them prettier than on week days. When the throng had mostly streamed into the porch, the sexton began to toll the bell, keeping his eye on the Reverend Mr. Hooper's door. The first glimpse of the clergyman's figure was the signal for the bell to cease its summons.

"But what has good Parson Hooper got upon his face?" cried the sexton in astonishment.

All within hearing immediately turned about, and beheld the semblance of Mr. Hooper, pacing slowly his meditative way toward the meeting-house. With one accord they started, expressing more wonder than if some strange minister were coming to dust the cushions of Mr. Hooper's pulpit.

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"Are you sure it is our parson?" inquired Goodman Gray of the sexton.

"Of a certainty it is good Mr. Hooper," replied the sexton. "He was to have exchanged pulpits with Parson Shute, of Westbury; but Parson Shute sent to excuse himself yesterday, having to preach a funeral sermon."

The cause of so much amazement may appear sufficiently slight. Mr. Hooper, a gentlemanly person, of about thirty, though still a bachelor, was dressed with due clerical neatness, as if a careful wife had starched his band, and brushed the weekly dust from his Sunday's garb. There was but one thing remarkable in his appearance. Swathed about his forehead, and hanging down over his face, so low as to be shaken by his breath, Mr. Hooper had on a black veil. On a nearer view it seemed to consist of two folds of crape which entirely concealed his features except the mouth and chin, but probably did not intercept his sight further than to give a darkened aspect to all living and inanimate things. With this gloomy shade before him, good Mr. Hooper walked onward at a slow and quiet pace, stooping somewhat and looking on the ground, as is customary with abstracted men, yet nodding kindly to those of his parishioners who still waited on the meeting-house steps. But so wonder-struck were they that his greeting hardly met with a return.

"I can't really feel as if good Mr. Hooper's face was behind that piece of crape," said the sexton.

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"I don't like it," muttered an old woman, as she hobbled into the meeting-house. "He has changed himself into something awful; only by hiding his face."

"Our parson has gone mad!" cried Goodman Gray, following him across the threshold.

A rumour of some unaccountable phenomenon had preceded Mr. Hooper into the meeting-house, and set all the congregation astir. Few could refrain from twisting their heads toward the door; many stood upright, and turned directly about; while several little boys clambered upon the seats, and came down again with a terrible racket. There was a general bustle, a rustling of the women's gowns and shuffling of the men's feet, greatly at variance with that hushed repose which should attend the entrance of the minister. But Mr. Hooper appeared not to notice the perturbation of his people. He entered with an almost noiseless step, bent his head mildly to the pews on each side, and bowed as he passed his oldest parishioner, a white-haired great-grandsire, who occupied an arm-chair in the centre of the aisle. It was strange to observe how slowly this venerable man became conscious of something singular in the appearance of his pastor. He seemed not fully to partake of the prevailing wonder till Mr. Hooper had ascended the stairs, and showed himself in the pulpit, face to face with his congregation, except for the black veil. That mysterious emblem was never once

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withdrawn. It shook with his measured breath as he gave out the psalm; it threw its obscurity between him and the holy page as he read the Scriptures; and while he prayed, the veil lay heavily on his uplifted countenance. Did he seek to hide it from the dread Being whom he was addressing?"

Such was the effect of this simple piece of crape, that more than one woman of delicate nerves was forced to leave the meeting-house. Yet perhaps the pale-faced congregation was almost as fearful a sight to the minister, as his black veil to them.

Mr. Hooper had the reputation of a good preacher, but not an energetic one: he strove to win his people heavenward by mild, persuasive influences, rather than to drive them thither by the thunders of the Word. The sermon which he now delivered was marked by the same characteristics of style and manner as the general series of his pulpit oratory. But there was something, either in the sentiment of the discourse itself, or in the imagination of the auditors, which made it greatly the most powerful effort that they had ever heard from their pastor's lips. It was tinged, rather more darkly than usual, with the gentle gloom of Mr. Hooper's temperament. The subject had reference to secret sin, and those sad mysteries which we hide from our nearest and dearest, and would fain conceal from our own consciousness, even forgetting that the Omniscient can detect

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them. A subtle power was breathed into his words. Each member of the congregation, the most innocent girl, and the man of hardened breast, felt as if the preacher had crept upon them, behind his awful veil, and discovered their hoarded iniquity of deed or thought. Many spread their clasped hands on their bosoms. There was nothing terrible in what Mr. Hooper said—at least, no violence; and yet, with every tremor of his melancholy voice, the hearers quaked. An unsought pathos came hand in hand with awe. So sensible were the audience of some unwonted attribute in their minister that they longed for a breath of wind to blow aside the veil, almost believing that a stranger's visage would be discovered, though the form, gesture, and voice were those of Mr. Hooper.

At the close of the services, the people hurried out with indecorous confusion, eager to communicate their pent-up amazement, and conscious of lighter spirits the moment they lost sight of the black veil. Some gathered in little circles, huddled closely together, with their mouths all whispering in the centre; some went homeward alone, wrapt in silent meditation; some talked loudly, and profaned the Sabbath day with ostentatious laughter. A few shook their sagacious heads, intimating that they could penetrate the mystery; while one or two affirmed that there was no mystery at all, but only that Mr. Hooper's eyes were so weakened

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by the midnight lamp as to require a shade. After a brief interval, forth came good Mr. Hooper also, in the rear of his flock. Turning his veiled face from one group to another, he paid due reverence to the hoary heads, saluted the middle-aged with kind dignity as their friend and spiritual guide, greeted the young with mingled authority and love, and laid his hands on the little children's heads to bless them. Such was always his custom on the Sabbath day. Strange and bewildered looks repaid him for his courtesy. None, as on former occasions, aspired to the honour of walking by their pastor's side. Old Squire Saunders, doubtless by an accidental lapse of memory, neglected to invite Mr. Hooper to his table, where the good clergyman had been wont to bless the food, almost every Sunday since his settlement. He returned, therefore, to the parsonage, and, at the moment of closing the door, was observed to look back upon the people, all of whom had their eyes fixed upon the minister. A sad smile gleamed faintly from beneath the black veil, and flickered about his mouth, glimmering as he disappeared.

"How strange," said a lady, "that a simple black veil, such as any woman might wear on her bonnet, should become such a terrible thing on Mr. Hooper's face!"

"Something must surely be amiss with Mr. Hooper's intellect," observed her husband, the physician of the village. "But the strangest

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part of the affair is the effect of this vagary, even on a sober-minded man like myself. The black veil, though it covers only our pastor's face, throws its influence over his whole person, and makes him ghostlike from head to foot.

Do you not feel it so?"

"Truly do I," replied the lady; "and I would not be alone with him for the world. I wonder he is not afraid to be alone with himself!"

"Men sometimes are so," said her husband.

The afternoon service was attended with similar circumstances. At its conclusion, the bell tolled for the funeral of a young lady. The relatives and friends were assembled in the house, and the more distant acquaintances stood about the door, speaking of the good qualities of the deceased, when their talk was interrupted by the appearance of Mr. Hooper, still covered with his black veil. It was now an appropriate emblem. The clergyman stepped into the room where the corpse was laid, and bent over the coffin, to take a last farewell of his deceased parishioner. As he stooped, the veil hung straight down from his forehead, so that, if her eyelids had not been closed forever, the dead maiden might have seen his face. Could Mr. Hooper be fearful of her glance, that he so hastily caught back the black veil? A person who watched the interview between the dead and living, scrupled not to affirm, that, at the instant when the clergyman's features were disclosed, the corpse had slightly shuddered

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rustling the shroud and muslin cap, though the countenance retained the composure of death. A superstitious old woman was the only witness of this prodigy. From the coffin Mr. Hooper passed into the chamber of the mourners, and thence to the head of the staircase, to make the funeral prayer. It was a tender and heart-dissolving prayer, full of sorrow, yet so imbued with celestial hopes that the music of a heavenly harp, swept by the fingers of the dead, seemed faintly to be heard among the saddest accents of the minister. The people trembled, though they but darkly understood him when he prayed that they, and himself, and all of mortal race, might be ready, as he trusted this young maiden had been, for the dreadful hour that should snatch the veil from their faces. The bearers went heavily forth, and the mourners followed, saddening all the street, with the dead before them, and Mr. Hooper in his black veil behind.

"Why do you look back?" said one in the procession to his partner.

"I had a fancy," replied she, "that the minister and the maiden's spirit were walking hand in hand."

"And so had I, at the same moment," said the other.

That night, the handsomest couple in Milford village were to be joined in wedlock. Though reckoned a melancholy man, Mr. Hooper had a placid cheerfulness for such occasions, which

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often excited a sympathetic smile where livelier merriment would have been thrown away. There was no quality of his disposition which made him more beloved than this. The company at the wedding awaited his arrival with impatience, trusting that the strange awe, which had gathered over him throughout the day, would now be dispelled. But such was not the result. When Mr. Hooper came, the first thing that their eyes rested on was the same horrible black veil, which had added deeper gloom to the funeral, and could portend nothing but evil to the wedding. Such was its immediate effect on the guests that a cloud seemed to have rolled duskily from beneath the black crape, and dimmed the light of the candles. The bridal pair stood up before the minister. But the bride's cold fingers quivered in the tremulous hand of the bridegroom, and her deathlike paleness caused a whisper that the maiden who had been buried a few hours before was come from her grave to be married. If ever another wedding were so dismal, it was that famous one where they tolled the wedding knell. After performing the ceremony, Mr. Hooper raised a glass of wine to his lips, wishing happiness to the new-married couple in a strain of mild pleasantry that ought to have brightened the features of the guests, like a cheerful gleam from the hearth. At that instant, catching a glimpse of his figure in the looking-glass, the black veil involved his own spirit in the horror

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with which it overwhelmed all others. His frame shuddered, his lips grew white, he spilt the untasted wine upon the carpet, and rushed forth into the darkness. For the Earth, too, had on her Black Veil.

The next day, the whole village of Milford talked of little else than Parson Hooper's black veil. That, and the mystery concealed behind it, supplied a topic for discussion between acquaintances meeting in the street, and good women gossiping at their open windows. It was the first item of news that the tavern-keeper told to his guests. The children babbled of it on their way to school. One imitative little imp covered his face with an old black handkerchief, thereby so affrighting his playmates that the panic seized himself, and he well-nigh lost his wits by his own waggery.

It was remarkable that of all the busybodies and impertinent people in the parish, not one ventured to put the plain question to Mr. Hooper, wherefore he did this thing. Hitherto, whenever there appeared the slightest call for such interference, he had never lacked advisers, nor shown himself averse to be guided by their judgment. If he erred at all, it was by so painful a degree of self-distrust, that even the mildest censure would lead him to consider an indifferent action as a crime. Yet, though so well acquainted with this amiable weakness, no individual among his parishioners chose to make the black veil a subject of friendly re-

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monstrance. There was a feeling of dread, neither plainly confessed nor carefully concealed, which caused each to shift the responsibility upon another, till at length it was found expedient to send a deputation of the church, in order to deal with Mr. Hooper about the mystery, before it should grow into a scandal. Never did an embassy so ill discharge its duties. The minister received them with friendly courtesy, but became silent after they were seated, leaving to his visitors the whole burden of introducing their important business. The topic, it might be supposed, was obvious enough. There was the black veil swathed round Mr. Hooper's forehead, and concealing every feature above his placid mouth, on which, at times, they could perceive the glimmering of a melancholy smile. But that piece of crape, to their imagination, seemed to hang down before his heart, the symbol of a fearful secret between him and them. Were the veil but cast aside, they might speak freely of it, but not till then. Thus they sat a considerable time, speechless, confused, and shrinking uneasily from Mr. Hooper's eye, which they felt to be fixed upon them with an invisible glance. Finally, the deputies returned abashed to their constituents, pronouncing the matter too weighty to be handled, except by a council of the churches, if, indeed, it might not require a general synod.

But there was one person in the village unappalled by the awe with which the black veil

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had impressed all besides herself. When the deputies returned without an explanation, or even venturing to demand one, she, with the calm energy of her character, determined to chase away the strange cloud that appeared to be settling round Mr. Hooper, every moment more darkly than before. As his plighted wife, it should be her privilege to know what the black veil concealed. At the minister's first visit, therefore, she entered upon the subject with a direct simplicity, which made the task easier both for him and her. After he had seated himself, she fixed her eyes steadfastly upon the veil, but could discern nothing of the dreadful gloom that had so overawed the multitude: it was but a double fold of crape, hanging down from his forehead to his mouth, and slightly stirring with his breath.

"No," said she aloud, and smiling, "there is nothing terrible in this piece of crape, except that it hides a face which I am always glad to look upon. Come, good sir, let the sun shine from behind the cloud. First lay aside your black veil: then tell me why you put it on."

Mr. Hooper's smile glimmered faintly.

"There is an hour to come," said he, "when all of us shall cast aside our veils. Take it not amiss, beloved friend, if I wear this piece of crape till then."

"Your words are a mystery, too," returned the young lady. "Take away the veil from them, at least."

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"Elizabeth, I will," said he, "so far as my vow may suffer me. Know, then, this veil is a type and a symbol, and I am bound to wear it ever, both in light and darkness, in solitude and before the gaze of multitudes, and as with strangers, so with my familiar friends. No mortal eye will see it withdrawn. This dismal shade must separate me from the world: even you, Elizabeth, can never come behind it!"

"What grievous affliction hath befallen you," she earnestly inquired, "that you should thus darken your eyes forever?"

"If it be a sign of mourning," replied Mr. Hooper, "I, perhaps, like most other mortals, have sorrows dark enough to be typified by a black veil."

"But what if the world will not believe that it is the type of an innocent sorrow?" urged Elizabeth. "Beloved and respected as you are, there may be whispers that you hide your face under the consciousness of secret sin. For the sake of your holy office, do away with this scandal!"

The colour rose into her cheeks as she intimated the nature of the rumours that were already abroad in the village. But Mr. Hooper's mildness did not forsake him. He even smiled again—that same sad smile, which always appeared like a faint glimmering of light, proceeding from the obscurity beneath the veil.

"If I hide my face for sorrow, there is cause enough," he merely replied; "and if I cover it

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for secret sin, what mortal might not do the same?"

And with this gentle, but unconquerable obstinacy did he resist all her entreaties. At length Elizabeth sat silent. For a few moments she appeared lost in thought, considering, probably, what new methods might be tried to withdraw her lover from so dark a fantasy, which, if it had no other meaning, was perhaps a symptom of mental disease. Though of a firmer character than his own, the tears rolled down her cheeks. But in an instant, as it were, a new feeling took the place of sorrow: her eyes were fixed insensibly on the black veil, when, like a sudden twilight in the air, its terrors fell around her. She arose, and stood trembling before him.

"And do you feel it then, at last?" said he mournfully.

She made no reply, but covered her eyes with her hand, and turned to leave the room. He rushed forward and caught her arm.

"Have patience with me, Elizabeth!" cried he, passionately. "Do not desert me, though this veil must be between us here on earth. Be mine, and hereafter there shall be no veil over my face, no darkness between our souls! It is but a mortal veil—it is not for eternity! O! you know not how lonely I am, and how frightened, to be alone behind my black veil. Do not leave me in this miserable obscurity forever!"

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"Lift the veil but once, and look me in the face," said she.

"Never! It cannot be!" replied Mr. Hooper.

"Then farewell!" said Elizabeth.

She withdrew her arm from his grasp, and slowly departed, pausing at the door, to give one long, shuddering gaze, that seemed almost to penetrate the mystery of the black veil. But, even amid his grief, Mr. Hooper smiled to think that only a material emblem had separated him from happiness, though the horrors, which it shadowed forth, must be drawn darkly between the fondest of lovers.

From that time no attempts were made to remove Mr. Hooper's black veil, or, by a direct appeal, to discover the secret which it was supposed to hide. By persons who claimed a superiority to popular prejudice, it was reckoned merely an eccentric whim, such as often mingles with the sober actions of men otherwise rational, and tinges them all with its own semblance of insanity. But with the multitude, good Mr. Hooper was irreparably a bugbear. He could not walk the street with any peace of mind, so conscious was he that the gentle and timid would turn aside to avoid him, and that others would make it a point of hardihood to throw themselves in his way. The impertinence of the latter class compelled him to give up his customary walk at sunset to the burial-ground; for when he leaned pensively over the gate, there would always be faces behind the grave-

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stones, peeping at his black veil. A fable went the rounds that the stare of the dead people drove him thence. It grieved him, to the very depth of his kind heart, to observe how the children fled from his approach, breaking up their merriest sports, while his melancholy figure was yet afar off. Their instinctive dread caused him to feel more strongly than aught else that a preternatural horror was interwoven with the threads of the black crape. In truth, his own antipathy to the veil was known to be so great that he never willingly passed before a mirror, nor stooped to drink at a still fountain, lest, in its peaceful bosom, he should be affrighted by himself. This was what gave plausibility to the whispers that Mr. Hooper's conscience tortured him for some great crime too horrible to be entirely concealed, or otherwise than so obscurely intimated. Thus, from beneath the black veil, there rolled a cloud into the sunshine, an ambiguity of sin or sorrow, which enveloped the poor minister, so that love or sympathy could never reach him. It was said that ghost and fiend consorted with him there. With self-shudderings and outward terrors, he walked continually in its shadow, groping darkly within his own soul, or gazing through a medium that saddened the whole world. Even the lawless wind, it was believed, respected his dreadful secret, and never blew aside the veil. But still good Mr. Hooper sadly smiled at the pale visages of the worldly throng as he passed by.

The Minister's Black Veil

Among all its bad influences, the black veil had the one desirable effect, of making its wearer a very efficient clergyman. By the aid of his mysterious emblem—for there was no other apparent cause—he became a man of awful power over souls that were in agony for sin. His converts always regarded him with a dread peculiar to themselves, affirming, though but figuratively, that, before he brought them to celestial light, they had been with him behind the black veil. Its gloom, indeed, enabled him to sympathise with all dark affections. Dying sinners cried aloud for Mr. Hooper, and would not yield their breath till he appeared; though ever, as he stooped to whisper consolation, they shuddered at the veiled face so near their own. Such were the terrors of the black veil, even when Death had bared his visage! Strangers came long distances to attend service at his church, with the mere idle purpose of gazing at his figure, because it was forbidden them to behold his face. But many were made to quake ere they departed! Once, during Governor Belcher's administration, Mr. Hooper was appointed to preach the election sermon. Covered with his black veil, he stood before the chief magistrate, the council, and the representatives, and wrought so deep an impression that the legislative measures of that year were characterised by all the gloom and piety of our earliest ancestral sway.

In this manner Mr. Hooper spent a long life,

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irreproachable in outward act, yet shrouded in dismal suspicions; kind and loving, though unloved, and dimly feared; a man apart from men, shunned in their health and joy, but ever summoned to their aid in mortal anguish. As years wore on, shedding their snows above his sable veil, he acquired a name throughout the New England churches, and they called him Father Hooper. Nearly all his parishioners, who were of mature age when he was settled, had been borne away by many a funeral: he had one congregation in the church, and a more crowded one in the churchyard; and having wrought so late into the evening, and done his work so well, it was now good Father Hooper's turn to rest.

Several persons were visible by the shaded candlelight, in the death chamber of the old clergyman. Natural connections he had none. But there was the decorously grave, though unmoved physician, seeking only to mitigate the last pangs of the patient whom he could not save. There were the deacons, and other eminently pious members of his church. There, also, was the Reverend Mr. Clark, of Westbury, a young and zealous divine, who had ridden in haste to pray by the bedside of the expiring minister. There was the nurse, no hired handmaiden of death, but one whose calm affection had endured thus long in secrecy, in solitude, amid the chill of age, and would not perish, even at the dying hour. Who, but Elizabeth!

The Minister's Black Veil

And there lay the hoary head of good Father Hooper upon the death pillow, with the black veil still swathed about his brow, and reaching down over his face, so that each more difficult gasp of his faint breath caused it to stir. All through life that piece of crape had hung between him and the world: it had separated him from cheerful brotherhood and woman's love, and kept him in that saddest of all prisons, his own heart; and still it lay upon his face, as if to deepen the gloom of his darksome chamber, and shade him from the sunshine of eternity.

For some time previous, his mind had been confused, wavering doubtfully between the past and the present, and hovering forward, as it were, at intervals, into the indistinctness of the world to come. There had been feverish turns, which tossed him from side to side, and wore away what little strength he had. But in his most convulsive struggles, and in the wildest vagaries of his intellect, when no other thought retained its sober influence, he still showed an awful solicitude lest the black veil should slip aside. Even if his bewildered soul could have forgotten, there was a faithful woman at his pillow, who, with averted eyes, would have covered that aged face, which she had last beheld in the comeliness of manhood. At length the death-stricken old man lay quietly in the torpor of mental and bodily exhaustion, with an imperceptible pulse, and breath that grew fainter and fainter, except when a long,

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deep, and irregular inspiration seemed to prelude the flight of his spirit.

The minister of Westbury approached the bedside.

"Venerable Father Hooper," said he, "the moment of your release is at hand. Are you ready for the lifting of the veil that shuts in time from eternity?"

Father Hooper at first replied merely by a feeble motion of his head; then, apprehensive, perhaps, that his meaning might be doubtful, he exerted himself to speak.

"Yea," said he, in faint accents, "my soul hath a patient weariness until that veil be lifted."

"And is it fitting," resumed the Reverend Mr. Clark, "that a man so given to prayer, of such a blameless example, holy in deed and thought, so far as mortal judgment may pronounce; is it fitting that a father in the church should leave a shadow on his memory that may seem to blacken a life so pure? I pray you, my venerable brother, let not this thing be! Suffer us to be gladdened by your triumphant aspect as you go to your reward. Before the veil of eternity be lifted, let me cast aside this black veil from your face!"

And thus speaking, the Reverend Mr. Clark bent forward to reveal the mystery of so many years. But, exerting a sudden energy that made all the beholders stand aghast, Father Hooper snatched both his hands from beneath the bed-

The Minister's Black Veil

clothes, and pressed them strongly on the black veil, resolute to struggle if the minister of Westbury would contend with a dying man.

"Never!" cried the veiled clergyman. "On earth, never!"

"Dark old man!" exclaimed the affrighted minister, "with what horrible crime upon your soul are you now passing to the judgment?"

Father Hooper's breath heaved; it rattled in his throat; but, with a mighty effort, grasping forward with his hands, he caught hold of life, and held it back till he should speak. He even raised himself in bed; and there he sat, shivering with the arms of death around him, while the black veil hung down, awful, at that last moment, in the gathered terrors of a lifetime. And yet the faint, sad smile, so often there, now seemed to glimmer from its obscurity, and linger on Father Hooper's lips.

"Why do you tremble at me alone?" cried he, turning his veiled face round the circle of pale spectators. "Tremble also at each other! Have men avoided me, and women shown no pity, and children screamed and fled, only for my black veil? What, but the mystery which it obscurely typifies, has made this piece of crape so awful? When the friend shows his inmost heart to his friend; the lover to his best beloved; when man does not vainly shrink from the eye of his Creator, loathsomely treasuring up the secret of his sin—then deem me a monster, for the symbol beneath which I have

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lived, and die! I look around me, and, lo! on every visage a Black Veil!"

While his auditors shrank from one another in mutual affright, Father Hooper fell back upon his pillow, a veiled corpse, with a faint smile lingering on the lips. Still veiled, they laid him in his coffin, and a veiled corpse they bore him to the grave. The grass of many years has sprung up and withered on that grave, the burial stone is moss-grown, and good Mr. Hooper's face is dust; but awful is still the thought that it mouldered beneath the Black Veil!

THE SIEGE OF BERLIN

BY

ALPHONSE DAUDET

As we went up the Champs Élysées with Doctor V——, we gleaned the story of Paris the besieged from the walls shattered by shells and the streets torn up by grapeshot. Just before coming to the Place de l'Étoile, the Doctor paused to point out to me one of the imposing group of mansions opposite the Arc de Triomphe.

"Do you see," he said, "the four closed windows up there on the balcony? At the beginning of August—that awful month of August, 1870, so fraught with wreck and ruin—I was called upon to attend an apoplectic case there. The stricken one was Colonel Jouve, a veteran Cuirassier of the First Empire. Surcharged with patriotic feeling and the glory of it, he had taken a balconied apartment in the Champs Élysées when the war broke out—and for what reason, do you imagine? To witness the triumphal return of our troops! Poor old fellow! Word of Wissembourg came as he got up from the table. At seeing Napoleon's name at the bottom of that bulletin of defeat, he fell insensible. I found the old Cuirassier prostrate upon the floor. His face was bloody, and he was

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senseless—as if struck with a club. On his feet, he would have been unusually tall; lying prone, he seemed gigantic. With fine features, splendid teeth, and curly hair, he carried his eighty years as if they were sixty. His granddaughter knelt over him in tears. She bore close resemblance to him. Side by side, they suggested to me two Greek medallions from the same die, only one was antique, earth-marked, its outlines slightly worn, while the other had all the charm of clear and fresh beauty.

“The grief of this child moved me. A daughter and granddaughter of soldiers—her father was one of MacMahon’s staff—the spectacle of this old man laid out in front of her brought to her mind another vision not less fearful. I tried my best to comfort her, though really I had little or no hope. We had to deal with hemoptysis, which at eighty is almost certainly fatal. Three days the patient remained thus, in a condition of lifelessness and torpor. In the interim, the news of Reichshofen came—recollect how oddly? Until evening, we all believed in a wonderful victory—twenty thousand Prussians wiped out, and the Crown Prince a prisoner.

“I shall never be able to determine by what miracle or magnetic force an intimation of this universal rejoicing could have reached our invalid. Heretofore, he had been deaf to everything about him, but that evening, on coming to his bedside, I beheld a new creature. His

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eye was bright, his speech easier, and he had sufficient strength to smile and stammer:

“‘Victory, victory.’

“‘Yes, Colonel, a great victory.’

“And, as I related the details of MacMahon’s glorious success, I saw his face soften and become illumined.

“When I was about to go his granddaughter, pale and sobbing, appealed to me.

“‘But he is saved,’ I said, pressing both her hands.

“The poor girl had hardly enough courage to reply. The real Reichshofen had just been announced: MacMahon a fugitive, the whole army beaten. Our eyes met in a look of consternation; she was full of concern for her father, while I feared for the grandfather. This new shock would be too much for him; but what were we to do? Leave him to the enjoyment of the delusion that had restored him to consciousness? To do this, we must practice duplicity. Hastily wiping away her tears, the brave girl said, ‘Well then, I will deceive him,’ and returned to her grandfather’s room with a cheerful face.

“What she had resolved to do was no light task. At first, because of his weak head, the old man believed everything told him with childish credulity. But, as he gained strength, his ideas became clearer.

“To keep in touch with the manœuvring of the army, despatches from the front were

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fabricated. Pitiable it was, indeed, to see that charming girl poring day and night over her map of Germany, studding it with little flags, planning an entire, splendid campaign—Bazaine on the way to Berlin, Frossard in Bavaria, MacMahon on the Baltic Sea. In doing this she asked for my advice, and I helped her as much as I could, but in these feigned hostilities the grandfather was of the greatest assistance. During the First Empire, he had conquered Germany so often. He knew all the tactics they should employ. 'Now they will do this. They should go there.' And he was proud to have all his predictions fulfilled. We captured towns, and won battles, but never fast enough for the Colonel, who was insatiable. He greeted me with a new stratagem every day.

"'Mayence is taken, Doctor,' said the young girl, meeting me with a pitiful smile, and through the door I heard the rapturous cry:

"'We are moving, we are moving! We shall take Berlin in a week!'

"At that very moment the Prussians wanted but a week to enter Paris. We considered moving to the provinces, but out there, where he could see the havoc made in the country, he would discover the truth, and I thought him still too weak to bear it. We decided to stay in town. On the first day of the siege, I called upon my patient with misgivings, I recollect, and with that heart-agony felt by all at the thought that the gates of Paris were closed, that

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the war had reached our very walls, and that our suburbs and frontiers were one.

"I found the old man elated. 'Well, the siege has begun,' he said. I looked at him in stupefaction.

"'Why, Colonel, how do you know?'"

"His granddaughter glanced at me, and said, 'Oh, yes, Doctor, it is glorious news—the siege of Berlin has begun.'

"She quietly said this while plying her needle. He was entirely without suspicion. The roaring of the cannon he could not hear, nor could he see Paris, the ill-fated, in dark demoralisation. What he did see from the watch-tower of his bed helped to carry out the delusion. With the Arc de Triomphe outside, there were in the room many reminders of the First Empire. Portraits of marshals, engravings of battles, the son of Napoleon in his baby-clothes; the austere brackets decked with brazen battle-memorials, covered with Imperial relics, medals, bronzes; a stone from St. Helena, under a glass shade; numerous miniatures of a light-eyed, much-be-curved lady in ball dress (a yellow gown with leg-of-mutton sleeves); and all these—the brackets, Napoleon's son, the medals, the yellow ladies in the gaudy straightness of the Empire gown, short-waisted and sashed under the arms—it was this environment of victorious warfare which made the siege of Berlin a fact so real to the poor Colonel!

"Thereafter, our military movements were

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less involved, and the taking of Berlin was merely a question of time. When the old man grew impatient with waiting, we would read him a letter from his son, fictitious of course, as nothing entered Paris, and as, since Sedan, Mac-Mahon's aide-de-camp was in a German fortress.

"Imagine, if you can, the desperation of the poor girl, with no news of her father, certain that he was in prison, necessitous, probably sick, and still pretending to make him speak in hopeful letters, properly brief, of course, as from a soldier on duty marching through a subjugated country. Often, when the invalid suffered from excessive weakness, news would not come for weeks. But suddenly, when he was worried and sleepless, a letter would arrive from Germany, which she read merrily at his bedside, choking back her tears. The Colonel listened attentively, with an air of smiling patronage, assenting, censuring, interpreting. But he outdid himself in his replies to his son. 'Always remember that you are a son of France,' he wrote; 'be kind to those unfortunate people. Make the invasion no harder than they can bear.'

"His counsel was unceasing: instructive lectures regarding the rights of others; the courtesy due to ladies—in fact, a complete guide to conquerors on the preservation of military honour. Besides this were some thoughts on diplomacy, and stipulations regarding the terms of peace to be made with the defeated. Con-

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cerning the latter, he was most generous: 'The indemnity of the war, but no more. Of what use is it to take provinces? Germany cannot be changed into France!'

"While giving these directions his voice never faltered, and his words evinced so much honesty of purpose and love of country that we were deeply moved. And all this time the siege was in progress, but not the siege of Berlin, alas!

"The weather was at its coldest, and we were suffering the heaviest bombardment, and the worst horrors of epidemic and famine. But owing to our care, and the unwearied tenderness bestowed upon him, the old man's comfort was never disturbed for a moment. I was even able to obtain white bread and fresh meat for him to the very end, but only for him.

"Could anything have been more touching than those breakfasts of the grandfather, so guilelessly selfish, propped up in bed, bright and smiling, a napkin tucked under his chin, by him his granddaughter was because of deprivation, directing the movements of his hands, compelling him to drink, urging him to eat the good things procured with such difficulty? Strengthened by a meal, and cheered by the warmth of the room, the old Cuirassier was reminded, by the snow which whirled past the window, to speak of his northern campaigns, and would tell us of that disastrous retreat from Russia, with nothing to eat but frozen biscuit and horse-flesh.

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“‘Can you imagine that, little one? We ate horse-flesh.’

“Of course she could imagine it, since, for two months, she had eaten nothing else!

“As he grew convalescent, our difficulties increased. The numbness passed from his senses as well as from his limbs, which made it all the harder for us to deceive him. On one or two occasions the cannonading at the Porte Maillot had made him start and listen like a horse on the battle-field; we accounted for it by telling him that Bazaine had just achieved a wonderful victory before Berlin, and what he had heard was the firing of salvos from the Invalides in honour of it.

“On the Thursday of Buzenval, we pushed his bed to the window, from which he saw some of the National Guard massed upon the Avenue de la Grande Armée.

“‘What soldiers are those?’ he inquired, and we heard him muttering, ‘Badly drilled—badly drilled.’

“Nothing else was said, but we made up our minds to show more caution in the future. Only, we did not show enough.

“The child met me, one evening, in great distress. ‘To-morrow they enter the city,’ she said.

“Was her grandfather’s door open then? In reflecting upon that evening afterwards, I have remembered that his face indicated great pensiveness. He may accidentally have heard what

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we said, thinking only of the French and their long-looked-for return with victory perched on their banners: MacMahon coming down the Avenue showered with flowers, and trumpets blowing a flourish; beside the Marshal, his own son; himself, on his balcony in the full uniform of Lützen, saluting the torn colours and powder-blackened eagles!

"Poor Colonel Jouve! Probably he fancied that we wished to keep him from participating at the defile of our troops, fearing the excitement would be too much for him, and so concealing it from him. But on the morrow, just as the Prussian army crept into the long road leading from the Porte Maillot to the Tuileries, the Colonel, arrayed in the battle-stained but glorious uniform of Milhaud's Cuirassiers, with helmet and sword, quietly raised the window, and stepped out upon the balcony.

"It seemed as if every effort of a fast-failing body and iron will had been summoned for this supreme moment, that he might stand to order, ready in harness.

"But what met his gaze as he stood at the railing? Paris, a hospital; all shutters closed; the broad Avenue silent; flags everywhere, but all white, stained with the red cross of suffering, and no one to meet our soldiers. He may have thought it all a mistake for an instant.

"But no. From behind the Arc de Triomphe comes the muffled sound of advancing troops, stepping to the measured beat of the little

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drums of Jena, then the spikes of helmets catch the sunlight, and, when the Place de l'Étoile is reached, the heavy tramp, tramp, of soldiers to the strains of Schubert's Triumphal March force the shocking truth upon him.

"An awful cry broke the sorrowful silence of the streets—a terrible cry:

"'To arms! To arms! The Prussians!'

"The four lancers who were in the vanguard might have looked up and seen a tall, old man wave his arms, stagger, and fall.

"Colonel Jouve had died at his post."

THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM

BY

EDGAR ALLAN POE

I WAS sick—sick unto death with that long agony; and when they at length unbound me, and I was permitted to sit, I felt that my senses were leaving me. The sentence—the dread sentence of death—was the last of distinct accentuation which reached my ears. After that, the sound of the inquisitorial voices seemed merged in one dreamy indeterminate hum. It conveyed to my soul the idea of *revolution*—perhaps from its association in fancy with the burr of a mill-wheel. This, only for a brief period; for presently I heard no more. Yet, for a while, I saw; but with how terrible an exaggeration! I saw the lips of the black-robed judges. They appeared to me white—whiter than the sheet upon which I trace these words—and thin even to grotesqueness; thin with the intensity of their expression of firmness—of immovable resolution—of stern contempt of human torture. I saw that the decrees of what to me was Fate were still issuing from those lips. I saw them writhe with a deadly locution. I saw them fashion the syllables of my name; and I shuddered because

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no sound succeeded. I saw, too, for a few moments of delirious horrors, the soft and nearly imperceptible waving of the sable draperies which enwrapped the walls of the apartment. And then my vision fell upon the seven tall candles upon the table. At first they wore the aspect of charity, and seemed white slender angels who would save me; but then, all at once, there came a most deadly nausea over my spirit, and I felt every fibre in my frame thrill as if I had touched the wire of a galvanic battery, while the angel forms became meaningless spectres with heads of flame, and I saw that from them there would be no help. And then there stole into my fancy, like a rich musical note, the thought of what sweet rest there must be in the grave. The thought came gently and stealthily, and it seemed long before it attained full appreciation; but, just as my spirit came at length properly to feel and entertain it, the figures of the judges vanished, as if magically, from before me; the tall candles sank into nothingness; their flames went out utterly; the blackness of darkness supervened; all sensations appeared swallowed up in a mad rushing descent as of the soul into Hades. Then silence, and stillness, and night were the universe.

I had swooned; but still will not say that all of consciousness was lost. What of it there remained, I will not attempt to define, or even to describe; yet all was not lost. In the deepest slumber—no! In delirium—no! In a swoon—

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no! In death—no! even in the grave all *is not* lost. Else there is no immortality for man. Arousing from the most profound of slumbers, we break the gossamer web of *some* dream. Yet in a second afterward (so frail may that web have been), we remember not that we have dreamed. In the return to life from the swoon, there are two stages; first, that of the sense of mental or spiritual; secondly, that of the sense of physical, existence. It seems probable that if, upon reaching the second stage, we could recall the impressions of the first, we should find these impressions eloquent in memories of the gulf beyond. And that gulf is—what? How at least shall we distinguish its shadows from those of the tomb? But if the impressions of what I have termed the first stage are not, at will, recalled, yet, after long interval, do they not come unbidden, while we marvel whence they came? He who has never swooned is not he who finds strange palaces and wildly familiar faces in coals that glow; is not he who beholds, floating in mid-air, the sad visions that the many may not view; is not he who ponders over the perfume of some novel flower—is not he whose brain grows bewildered with the meaning of some musical cadence which has never before arrested his attention.

Amid frequent and thoughtful endeavours to remember; amid earnest struggles to regather some token of the state of seeming nothingness into which my soul had lapsed, there have been

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moments when I dreamed of success; there have been brief, very brief, periods when I have conjured up remembrances which the lucid reason of a later epoch assures me could have had reference only to that condition of seeming unconsciousness. These shadows of memory tell, indistinctly, of tall figures that lifted and bore me in silence down—down—still down—till a hideous dizziness oppressed me at the mere idea of the interminableness of the descent. They tell, also, of a vague horror at my heart, on account of that heart's unnatural stillness. Then comes a sense of sudden motionlessness throughout all things; as if those who bore me (a ghastly train!) had outrun, in their descent, the limits of the limitless, and paused from the wearisomeness of their toil. After this I call to mind flatness and dampness; and then all is *madness*—the madness of a memory which busies itself among forbidden things.

Very suddenly there came back to my soul motion and sound—the tumultuous motion of the heart, and, in my ears, the sound of its beating. Then a pause in which all is blank. Then again sound, and motion, and touch—a tingling sensation pervading my frame. Then the mere consciousness of existence, without thought—a condition which lasted long. Then, very suddenly, *thought*, and shuddering terror, and earnest endeavour to comprehend my true state. Then a strong desire to lapse into insensibility. Then a rushing revival of soul and

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a successful effort to move. And now a full memory of the trial, of the judges, of the sable draperies, of the sentence, of the sickness, of the swoon. Then entire forgetfulness of all that followed; of all that a later day and much earnestness of endeavour have enabled me vaguely to recall.

So far, I had not opened my eyes. I felt that I lay upon my back, unbound. I reached out my hand, and it fell heavily upon something damp and hard. There I suffered it to remain for many minutes, while I strove to imagine where and *what* I could be. I longed, yet dared not to employ my vision. I dreaded the first glance at objects around me. It was not that I feared to look upon things horrible, but that I grew aghast lest there should be *nothing* to see. At length, with a wild desperation at heart, I quickly unclosed my eyes. My worst thoughts, then, were confirmed. ~~The blackness of eternal~~ night encompassed me. ~~I struggled for breath.~~ The intensity of the darkness seemed to oppress and stifle me. The atmosphere was intolerably close. I still lay quietly, and made effort to exercise my reason. I brought to mind the inquisitorial proceedings, and attempted from that point to deduce my real condition. The sentence had passed; and it appeared to me that a very long interval of time had since elapsed. Yet not for a moment did I suppose myself actually dead. Such a supposition, notwithstanding what we read in fiction, is altogether

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inconsistent with real existence—but where and in what state was I? The condemned to death, I knew, perished usually at the *auto-da-fés*, and one of these had been held on the very night of the day of my trial. Had I been remanded to my dungeon, to await the next sacrifice, which would not take place for many months? This, I at once saw, could not be. Victims had been in immediate demand. Moreover, my dungeon, as well as all the condemned cells at Toledo, had stone floors, and light was not altogether excluded.

A fearful idea now suddenly drove the blood in torrents upon my heart, and, for a brief period, I once more relapsed into insensibility. Upon recovering, I at once started to my feet, trembling convulsively in every fibre. I thrust my arms wildly above and around me in all directions. I felt nothing; yet dreaded to move a step, lest I should be impeded by the walls of a *tomb*. Perspiration burst from every pore, and stood in cold, big beads upon my forehead. The agony of suspense grew at length intolerable, and I cautiously moved forward, with my arms extended, and my eyes straining from their sockets in the hope of catching some faint ray of light. I proceeded for many paces; but still all was blackness and vacancy. I breathed more freely. It seemed evident that mine was not, at least, the most hideous of fates.

And now, as I still continued to step cautiously onward, there came thronging upon my recollec-

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tion a thousand vague rumours of the horrors of Toledo. Of the dungeons there had been strange things narrated—fables I had always deemed them—but yet strange, and too ghastly to repeat save in a whisper. Was I left to perish of starvation in this subterranean world of darkness; or what fate, perhaps even more fearful, awaited me? That the result would be death, and a death of more than customary bitterness, I knew too well the character of my judges to doubt. The mode and the hour were all that occupied or distracted me.

My outstretched hands at length encountered some solid obstruction. It was a wall, seemingly of stone masonry—very smooth, slimy, and cold. I followed it up; stepping with all the careful distrust with which certain antique narratives had inspired me. This process, however, afforded me no means of ascertaining **the** dimensions of my dungeon, as I might make its circuit and return to the point whence I set out without being aware of the fact—so perfectly uniform seemed the wall. I therefore sought the knife, which had been in my pocket when led into the inquisitorial chamber; but it was gone; my clothes had been exchanged for a wrapper of coarse serge. I had thought of forcing the blade in some minute crevice of the masonry, so as to identify my point of departure. The difficulty, nevertheless, was but trivial; although in the disorder of my fancy it seemed at first insuperable. I tore a part of the hem

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from the robe, and placed the fragment at full length, and at right angles to the wall. In groping my way around the prison, I could not fail to encounter this rag upon completing the circuit. So, at least, I thought; but I had not counted upon the extent of the dungeon, or upon my own weakness. The ground was moist and slippery. I staggered onward for some time, when I stumbled and fell. My excessive fatigue induced me to remain prostrate; and sleep soon overtook me as I lay.

Upon awaking, and stretching forth an arm, I found beside me a loaf and a pitcher of water. I was too much exhausted to reflect upon this circumstance, but ate and drank with avidity. Shortly afterward I resumed my tour around the prison, and, with much toil, came at last upon the fragment of the serge. Up to the period when I fell I had counted fifty-two paces, and, upon resuming my walk, I had counted forty-eight more—when I arrived at the rag. There were in all, then, a hundred paces; and, admitting two paces to the yard, I presumed the dungeon to be fifty yards in circuit. I had met, however, with many angles in the wall, and thus I could form no guess at the shape of the vault, for vault I could not help supposing it to be.

I had little object—certainly no hope—in these researches; but a vague curiosity prompted me to continue them. Quitting the wall, I resolved to cross the area of the enclosure.

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At first I proceeded with extreme caution, for the floor, although seemingly of solid material, was treacherous with slime. At length, however, I took courage, and did not hesitate to step firmly—endeavouring to cross in as direct a line as possible. I had advanced some ten or twelve paces in this manner, when the remnant of the torn hem of my robe became entangled between my legs. I stepped on it, and fell violently on my face.

In the confusion attending my fall I did not immediately apprehend a somewhat startling circumstance which yet, in a few seconds afterward, and while I still lay prostrate, arrested my attention. It was this: my chin rested upon the floor of the prison, but my lips and the upper portion of my head, although seemingly at a less elevation than the chin, touched nothing. At the same time my forehead seemed bathed in a clammy vapour, and the peculiar smell of decayed fungus arose to my nostrils. I put forward my arm, and shuddered to find that I had fallen at the very brink of a circular pit, whose extent, of course, I had no means of ascertaining at the moment. Groping about the masonry just below the margin, I succeeded in dislodging a small fragment, and let it fall into the abyss. For many seconds I harkened to its reverberations as it dashed against the sides of the chasm in its descent: at length there was a sudden plunge into water, succeeded by loud echoes. At the same moment there came

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a sound resembling the quick opening, and as rapid closing, of a door overhead, while a faint gleam of light flashed suddenly through the gloom, and as suddenly faded away.

I saw clearly the doom which had been prepared for me, and congratulated myself upon the timely accident by which I had escaped. Another step before my fall, and the world had seen me no more. And the death just avoided was of that very character which I had regarded as fabulous and frivolous in the tales respecting the Inquisition. To the victims of its tyranny, there was the choice of death with its direst physical agonies, or death with its most hideous moral horrors. I had been reserved for the latter. By long suffering my nerves had been unstrung, until I trembled at the sound of my own voice, and had become in every respect a fitting subject for the species of torture which awaited me.

Shaking in every limb, I groped my way back to the wall—resolving there to perish rather than risk the terror of the wells, of which my imagination now pictured many in various positions about the dungeon. In other conditions of mind I might have had courage to end my misery at once, by a plunge into one of these abysses; but now I was the veriest of cowards. Neither could I forget what I had read of these pits—that the *sudden* extinction of life formed no part of their most horrible plan.

Agitation of the spirit kept me awake for

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many long hours; but at length I again slumbered. Upon arousing I found by my side, as before, a loaf and a pitcher of water. A burning thirst consumed me, and I emptied the vessel at a draught. It must have been drugged—for scarcely had I drunk before I became irresistibly drowsy. A deep sleep fell upon me—a sleep like that of death. How long it lasted of course I know not; but when once again I unclosed my eyes, the objects around me were visible. By a wild, sulphurous lustre, the origin of which I could not at first determine, I was enabled to see the extent and aspect of the prison.

In its size I had been greatly mistaken. The whole circuit of its walls did not exceed twenty-five yards. For some minutes this fact occasioned me a world of vain trouble; vain indeed—for what could be of less importance, under the terrible circumstances which environed me, than the mere dimensions of my dungeon! But my soul took a wild interest in trifles, and I busied myself in endeavouring to account for the error I had committed in my measurement. The truth at length flashed upon me. In my first attempt at exploration I had counted fifty-two paces up to the period when I fell: I must then have been within a pace or two of the fragment of serge; in fact, I had nearly performed the circuit of the vault. I then slept—and, upon awaking, I must have returned upon my steps—thus supposing the circuit nearly

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double what it actually was. My confusion of mind prevented me from observing that I began my tour with the wall to the left, and ended it with the wall to the right.

I had been deceived, too, in respect to the shape of the enclosure. In feeling my way I had found many angles, and thus deduced an idea of great irregularity; so potent is the effect of total darkness upon one arousing from lethargy or sleep! The angles were simply those of a few slight depressions, or niches, at odd intervals. The general shape of the prison was square. What I had taken for masonry seemed now to be iron, or some other metal, in huge plates, whose sutures or joints occasioned the depression. The entire surface of this metallic enclosure was rudely daubed in all the hideous and repulsive devices to which the charnel superstition of the monks had given rise. The figures of fiends in aspects of menace, with skeleton forms, and other more really fearful images, overspread and disfigured the walls. I observed that the outlines of these monstrosities were sufficiently distinct, but that the colours seemed faded and blurred, as if from the effects of a damp atmosphere. I now noticed the floor, too, which was of stone. In the centre yawned the circular pit from whose jaws I had escaped; but it was the only one in the dungeon.

All this I saw indistinctly and by much effort—for my personal condition had been greatly changed during slumber. I now lay upon my

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back, and at full length, on a species of low framework of wood. To this I was securely bound by a long strap resembling a surcingle. It passed in many convolutions about my limbs and body, leaving at liberty only my head, and my left arm to such extent that I could, by dint of much exertion, supply myself with food from an earthen dish which lay by my side on the floor. I saw, to my horror, that the pitcher had been removed. I say to my horror—for I was consumed with intolerable thirst. This thirst it appeared to be the design of my persecutors to stimulate—for the food in the dish was meat pungently seasoned.

Looking upward, I surveyed the ceiling of my prison. It was some thirty or forty feet overhead, and constructed much as the side walls. In one of its panels a very singular figure riveted my whole attention. It was the painted figure of Time as he is commonly represented, save that, in lieu of a scythe, he held what, at a casual glance, I supposed to be the pictured image of a huge pendulum, such as we see on antique clocks. There was something, however, in the appearance of this machine which caused me to regard it more attentively. While I gazed directly upward at it (for its position was immediately over my own), I fancied that I saw it in motion. In an instant afterwards the fancy was confirmed. Its sweep was brief and, of course, slow. I watched it for some minutes, somewhat in fear, but more

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in wonder. Wearied at length with observing its dull movement, I turned my eyes upon the other objects in the cell.

A slight noise attracted my notice, and, looking to the floor, I saw several enormous rats traversing it. They had issued from the well, which lay just within view to my right. Even then, while I gazed, they came up in troops, hurriedly, with ravenous eyes, allured by the scent of the meat. From this it required much effort and attention to scare them away.

It might have been half an hour, perhaps even an hour (for I could take but imperfect note of time), before I again cast my eyes upward. What I then saw confounded and amazed me. The sweep of the pendulum had increased in extent by nearly a yard. As a natural consequence, its velocity was also much greater. But what mainly disturbed me was the idea that it had perceptibly *descended*. I now observed—with what horror it is needless to say—that its nether extremity was formed of a crescent of glittering steel, about a foot in length from horn to horn; the horns upward, and the under edge evidently as keen as that of a razor. Like a razor also it seemed massy and heavy, tapering from the edge into a solid and broad structure above. It was appended to a weighty rod of brass, and the whole *hissed* as it swung through the air.

I could no longer doubt the doom prepared for me by monkish ingenuity in torture. My

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cognisance of the pit had become known to the inquisitorial agents—the *pit*, whose horrors had been destined for so bold a recusant as myself—the *pit*, typical of hell and regarded by rumour as the Ultima Thule of all their punishments. The plunge into this pit I had avoided by the merest of accidents, and I knew that surprise, or entrapment into torment, formed an important portion of all the grotesquerie of these dungeon deaths. Having failed to fall, it was no part of the demon-plan to hurl me into the abyss; and thus (there being no alternative) a different and a milder destruction awaited me. Milder! I half smiled in my agony as I thought of such application of such a term.

What boots it to tell of the long, long hours of horror more than mortal, during which I counted the rushing oscillations of the steel! Inch by inch—line by line—with a descent only appreciable at intervals that seemed ages—down and still down it came! Days passed—it might have been that many days passed—ere it swept so closely over me as to fan me with its acrid breath. The odour of the sharp steel forced itself into my nostrils. I prayed—I wearied heaven with my prayer for its more speedy descent. I grew frantically mad, and struggled to force myself upward against the sweep of the fearful scimitar. And then I fell suddenly calm, and lay smiling at the glittering death, as a child at some rare bauble.

There was another interval of utter insensi-

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bility; it was brief; for, upon again lapsing into life, there had been no perceptible descent in the pendulum. But it might have been long—for I knew there were demons who took note of my swoon, and who could have arrested the vibration at pleasure. Upon my recovery, too, I felt very—oh, inexpressibly!—sick and weak, as if through long inanition. Even amid the agonies of that period, the human nature craved food. With painful effort I outstretched my left arm as far as my bonds permitted, and took possession of the small remnant which had been spared me by the rats. As I put a portion of it within my lips, there rushed to my mind a half-formed thought of joy—of hope. Yet what business had I with hope? It was, as I say, a half-formed thought—man has many such, which are never completed. I felt that it was of joy—of hope; but I felt also that it had perished in its formation. In vain I struggled to perfect—to regain it. Long suffering had nearly annihilated all my ordinary powers of mind. I was an imbecile—an idiot.

The vibration of the pendulum was at right angles to my length. I saw that the crescent was designed to cross the region of the heart. It would fray the serge of my robe—it would return and repeat its operations—again—and again. Notwithstanding its terrifically wide sweep (some thirty feet or more), and the hissing vigour of its descent, sufficient to sunder these very walls of iron, still the fraying of my

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robe would be all that, for several minutes, it would accomplish. And at this thought I paused. I dared not go farther than this reflection. I dwelt upon it with a pertinacity of attention—as if, in so dwelling, I could afrest *here* the descent of the steel. I forced myself to ponder upon the sound of the crescent as it should pass across the garment—upon the peculiar thrilling sensation which the friction of cloth produces on the nerves. I pondered upon all this frivolity until my teeth were on edge.

Down—steadily down—it crept. I took a frenzied pleasure in contrasting its downward with its lateral velocity. To the right—to the left—far and wide—with the shriek of a damned spirit! to my heart, with the stealthy pace of the tiger! I alternately laughed and howled, as the one or the other idea grew predominant.

Down—certainly, relentlessly down! It vibrated within three inches of my bosom! I struggled violently—furiously—to free my left arm. This was free only from the elbow to the hand. I could reach the latter from the platter beside me to my mouth, with great effort, but no farther. Could I have broken the fastenings above the elbow, I would have seized and attempted to arrest the pendulum. I might as well have attempted to arrest an avalanche!

Down—still unceasingly—still inevitably down. I gasped and struggled at each vibration. I shrank convulsively at its every sweep. My

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eyes followed its outward or upward whirls with the eagerness of the most unmeaning despair; they closed themselves spasmodically at the descent, although death would have been a relief, oh, how unspeakable! Still I quivered in every nerve to think how slight a sinking of the machinery would precipitate that keen, glistening axe upon my bosom. It was *hope* that prompted the nerve to quiver—the frame to shrink. It was *hope*—the hope that triumphs on the rack—that whispers to the death-condemned even in the dungeons of the Inquisition.

I saw that some ten or twelve vibrations would bring the steel in actual contact with my robe—and, with this observation, there suddenly came over my spirit all the keen, collected calmness of despair. For the first time during many hours—or perhaps days—I *thought*. It now occurred to me that the bandage, or surcingle, which enveloped me, was *unique*. I was tied by no separate cord. The first stroke of the razor-like crescent athwart any portion of the band would so detach it that it might be unwound from my person by means of my left hand. But how fearful, in that case, the proximity of the steel! The result of the slightest struggle, how deadly! Was it likely, moreover, that the minions of the torturer had not foreseen and provided for this possibility? Was it probable that the bandage crossed my bosom in the track of the pendulum? Dreading

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to find my faint, and, as it seemed, my last, hope frustrated, I so far elevated my head as to obtain a distinct view of my breast. The surcingle enveloped my limbs and body close in all directions—*save in the path of the destroying crescent.*

Scarcely had I dropped my head back into its original position, when there flashed upon my mind what I cannot better describe than as the unformed half of that idea of deliverance to which I have previously alluded, and of which a moiety only floated indeterminately through my brain when I raised food to my burning lips. The whole thought was now present—feeble, scarcely sane, scarcely definite—but still entire. I proceeded at once, with the nervous energy of despair, to attempt its execution.

For many hours the immediate vicinity of the low framework upon which I lay had been literally swarming with rats. They were wild, bold, ravenous—their red eyes glaring upon me as if they waited but for motionlessness on my part to make me their prey. “To what food,” I thought, “have they been accustomed in the well?”

They had devoured, in spite of all my efforts to prevent them, all but a small remnant of the contents of the dish. I had fallen into an habitual see-saw, or wave of the hand about the platter; and at length the unconscious uniformity of the movement deprived it of effect. In their voracity the vermin frequently fastened

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their sharp fangs in my fingers. With the particles of the oily and spicy viand which now remained I thoroughly rubbed the bandage wherever I could reach it; then, raising my hand from the floor, I lay breathlessly still.

At first the ravenous animals were startled and terrified at the change—at the cessation of movement. They shrank alarmedly back; many sought the well. But this was only for a moment. I had not counted in vain upon their voracity. Observing that I remained without motion, one or two of the boldest leaped upon the framework and smelt at the surcingle. This seemed the signal for a general rush. Forth from the well they hurried in fresh troops. They clung to the wood—they overran it, and leaped in hundreds upon my person. The measured movement of the pendulum disturbed them not at all. Avoiding its strokes, they busied themselves with the anointed bandage. They pressed—they swarmed upon me in ever accumulating heaps. They writhed upon my throat; their cold lips sought my own; I was half stifled by their thronging pressure; disgust for which the world has no name swelled my bosom, and chilled, with a heavy clamminess, my heart. Yet one minute, and I felt that the struggle would be over. Plainly I perceived the loosening of the bandage. I knew that, in more than one place, it must be already severed. With a more than human resolution I lay *still*.

Nor had I erred in my calculations—nor had

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I endured in vain. I at length felt that I was *free*. The surcingle hung in ribbons from my body. But the stroke of the pendulum already pressed upon my bosom. It had divided the serge of the robe. It had cut through the linen beneath. Twice again it swung, and a sharp sense of pain shot through every nerve. But the moment of escape had arrived. At a wave of my hand my deliverers hurried tumultuously away. With a steady movement—cautious, sidelong, shrinking, and slow—I slid from the embrace of the bandage and beyond the reach of the scimitar. For the moment, at least, *I was free*.

Free!—and in the grasp of the Inquisition! I had scarcely stepped from my wooden bed of horror upon the stone floor of the prison when the motion of the hellish machine ceased, and I beheld it drawn up, by some invisible force, through the ceiling. My every motion was undoubtedly watched. Free!—I had but escaped death in one form of agony, to be delivered unto worse than death in some other. With that thought I rolled my eyes nervously around on the barriers of iron that hemmed me in. Something unusual—some change which, at first, I could not appreciate distinctly—it was obvious had taken place in the apartment. For many minutes of a dreamy and trembling abstraction I busied myself in vain, unconnected conjecture. During this period I became aware, for the first time, of the origin of the

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sulphurous light which illumined the cell. It proceeded from a fissure, about half an inch in width, extending entirely around the prison at the base of the walls, which thus appeared, and were, completely separated from the floor. I endeavoured, but of course in vain, to look through the aperture.

As I arose from the attempt the mystery of the alteration in the chamber broke at once upon my understanding. I have observed that, although the outlines of the figures upon the walls were sufficiently distinct, yet the colours seemed blurred and indefinite. These colours had assumed, and were momentarily assuming, a startling and most intense brilliancy, that gave to the spectral and fiendish portraitures an aspect that might have thrilled even firmer nerves than my own. Demon eyes, of a wild and ghastly vivacity, glared upon me in a thousand directions, where none had been visible before, and gleamed with the lurid lustre of a fire that I could not force my imagination to regard as unreal.

Unreal!—Even while I breathed there came to my nostrils the breath of the vapour of heated iron! A suffocating odour pervaded the prison! A deeper glow settled each moment in the eyes that glared at my agonies! A richer tint of crimson diffused itself over the pictured horrors of blood. I panted! I gasped for breath! There could be no doubt of the design of my tormentors—oh! most unrelenting! oh! most demoniac of

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men! I shrank from the glowing metal to the centre of the cell. Amid the thought of the fiery destruction that impended, the idea of the coolness of the well came over my soul like balm. I rushed to its deadly brink. I threw my straining vision belqw. The glare from the enkindled roof illumined its inmost recesses. Yet for a wild moment did my spirit refuse to comprehend the meaning of what I saw. At length it forced—it wrestled its way into my soul—it burned itself in upon my shuddering reason. Oh! for a voice to speak!—oh! horror!—oh! any horror but this! With a shriek I rushed from the margin, and buried my face in my hands—weeping bitterly.

The heat rapidly increased, and once again I looked up, shuddering as with a fit of the ague. There had been a second change in the cell—and now the change was obviously in the *form*. As before, it was in vain that I at first endeavoured to appreciate or understand what was taking place. But not long was I left in doubt. The Inquisitorial vengeance had been hurried by my two-fold escape, and there was to be no more dallying with the King of Terrors. The room had been square. I saw that two of its iron angles were now acute—two, consequently, obtuse. The fearful difference quickly increased with a low rumbling or moaning sound. In an instant the apartment had shifted its form into that of a lozenge. But the alteration stopped not here—I neither hoped nor desired

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it would stop. I could have clasped the red walls to my bosom as a garment of eternal peace. "Death," I said, "any death but that of the pit!" Fool! might I not have known that *into the pit* it was the object of the burning iron to urge me? Could I resist its glows? or if even that, could I withstand its pressure? And now, flatter and flatter grew the lozenge, with a rapidity that left me no time for contemplation. Its centre, and of course its greatest width, came just over the yawning gulf. I shrank back—but the closing walls pressed me resistlessly onward. At length for my seared and writhing body there was no longer an inch of foothold on the firm floor of the prison. I struggled no more, but the agony of my soul found vent in one loud, long, and final scream of despair. I felt that I tottered upon the brink—I averted my eyes——

There was a discordant hum of human voices! There was a loud blast as of many trumpets! There was a harsh grating as of a thousand thunders! The fiery walls rushed back! An outstretched arm caught my own as I fell, fainting, into the abyss. It was that of General Lasalle. The French army had entered Toledo. The Inquisition was in the hands of its enemies!

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REALITY

BY

CHARLES READE

MISS SOPHIA JACKSON, in the State of Illinois, was a beautiful girl, and had a devoted lover, Ephraim Slade, a merchant's clerk. Their attachment was sullenly permitted by Miss Jackson's parents, but not encouraged: they thought she might look higher.

Sophia said, "Why, la! he is handsome and good, and loves me, and is not that enough?"

They said, "No; to marry Beauty, a man ought to be rich."

"Well," said Sophy, "he is on the way to it: he is in a merchant's office."

"It is a long road; for he is only a clerk."

The above is a fair specimen of the dialogue, and conveys as faint an idea of it as specimens generally do.

All this did not prevent Ephraim and Sophia from spending many happy hours together.

But presently another figure came on the scene—Mr. Jonathan Clarke. He took a fancy to Miss Jackson, and told her parents so, and that she was the wife for him, if she was disengaged. They said, "Well, now, there was a

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young clerk after her, but the man was too poor to marry her."

Now, Mr. Jonathan Clarke was a wealthy speculator; so, on that information, he felt superior, and courted her briskly.

She complained to Ephraim. "The idea of their encouraging that fat fool to think of me!" said she. She called him old, though he was but thirty, and turned his person and sentiments into ridicule, though, in the opinion of sensible people, he was a comely man, full of good sense and sagacity.

Mr. Clarke paid her compliments. Miss Jackson laughed, and reported them to Slade in a way to make him laugh too.

Mr. Clarke asked her to marry him. She said no; she was too young to think of that. She told Ephraim she had flatly refused him.

Mr. Clarke made her presents. She refused the first, and blushed, but was prevailed on to accept. She accepted the second and the third, without first refusing them.

She did not trouble Ephraim Slade with any portion of this detail. She was afraid it might give him pain.

Clarke wooed her so warmly that Ephraim got jealous and unhappy. He remonstrated. Sophia cried, and said it was all her parents' fault—forcing the man upon her.

Clarke was there every day. Ephraim scolded. Sophia was cross. They parted in anger.

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Sophia went home, and snubbed Clarke. Clarke laughed, and said, "Take your time."

He stuck there four hours. She came round, and was very civil.

Matters progressed. Ephraim always unhappy. Clark always jolly. Parents in the same mind.

Clarke urged her to name the day.

"Never!"

Urged her again.

"Next year."

Urged her again before her parents. They put in their word. "Sophy, don't trifle any longer. You are overdoing it."

"There, there, do what you like with me," said the girl; "I am miserable!" and ran out crying.

Clarke and parents laughed, and stayed behind, and settled the day.

When Sophy found they had settled the day, she sent for Ephraim and told him, with many tears: "Oh!" said she, "you little know what I have suffered this six months!"

"My poor girl," said Ephraim, "let us elope and end it."

"What! My parents would curse me."

"Oh, they would forgive us in time!"

"Never. You don't know them. No, my poor Ephraim, we are unfortunate. We can never be happy together. We must bow. I should die if this went on much longer."

"You are a fickle, faithless jade!" cried Ephraim, in agony.

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"God forgive you, dear!" said she, and wept silently.

Then he tried to comfort her. Then she put her arm round his neck, and assured him she yielded to constraint, but her heart could never forget him; she was more unhappy than he, and always should be.

They parted, with many tears on both sides, and she married Clarke. At her earnest request, Slade kept away from the ceremony. By that means she was not compelled to wear the air of a victim, but could fling the cloak of illusory happiness and gayety over her aching heart; and she did it, too. She was as gay a bride as had been seen for some years in those parts.

Ephraim Slade was very unhappy. However, after a bit, he comprehended the character of Sophia Clarke, *née* Jackson, and even imitated her. She had gone in for money, and so did he: only on the square—a detail she had omitted. Years went on: he became a partner in the house, instead of a clerk. The girls set their caps at him. But he did not marry. Mrs. Clarke observed this, and secretly approved. Say she had married, that was no reason why *he* should. *Justice des femmes!*

Now you will observe that, by all the laws of fiction, Mrs. Clarke ought to have learned, to her cost, that money does not bring happiness, and ought to have been miserable, especially whenever she encountered the pale face of *him* whose love she valued too late.

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Well, she broke all those laws, and went in for Life as it is. She was happier than most wives. Her husband was kind, but not doting; a gentle master, but no slave. And she liked it. She had two beautiful children, and they helped fill her life. Her husband's gold smoothed her path, and his manly affection strewed it with flowers. She was not passionately devoted to him, but still, by the very laws of nature, the wife was fonder of Jonathan than the maid had ever been of Ephraim; not but what the latter remaining unmarried tickled her vanity, and so completed her content.

She passed six years in clover, and the clover in full bloom all the time. Nevertheless, gilt happiness is apt to get a rub sooner or later. Clarke had losses one upon another, and at last told her he was done for. He must go back to California, and make another fortune. "Lucky the old folks made me settle a good lump on you," said he. "You are all right, and the children."

Away went stout-hearted Clarke, and left his wife behind. He knew the country, and went at all in the ring, and began to remake money fast.

His letters were not very frequent, nor models of conjugal love, but they had good qualities. One was their contents—a draft on New York.

Some mischievous person reported that he was often seen about with the same lady; but

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Mrs. Clarke did not believe that, the remittances being regular.

But presently both letters and remittances ceased. Then she believed the worst, and sent a bitter remonstrance.

She received no reply.

Then she wrote a bitterer one, and, for the first time since their union, cast Ephraim Slade in his teeth. "There he is," said she, "unmarried to this day, for my sake."

No reply even to this.

She went to her parents, and told them how she was used.

They said they had foreseen it—that being a lie some people think it necessary to deliver themselves of before going seriously into any question—and then, after a few pros and cons, they bade her observe that her old lover, Ephraim Slade, was a rich man, a man unmarried evidently for her sake. If she was wise, she would look that way, and get rid of a mock husband, who was probably either dead or false, and, in any case, had deserted her.

"But what am I to *do?*" said Mrs. Clarke, affecting not to know what they were driving at.

"Why, sue for a divorce."

"Divorce Jonathan! Think of it! He is the father of my children, and he was a good husband to me all the time he was with me. It is all that nasty California." And she began to cry.

The old people told her she must take people

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as they were, not as they had been; and it was no fault of hers, nor California's, if her husband was a changed man.

In short, they pressed her hard to sue for a divorce and let Slade know she was going to do it.

But the woman was still handsome and under thirty, and was not without a certain pride and delicacy that grace her sex even when they lack the more solid virtues. "No," said she, "I will never go begging to any man. I'll not let Ephraim Slade think I divorced my husband just to get him. I'll part with Jonathan, since he has parted with me, and after that I will take my chance. Ephraim Slade? He is not the only man in the world with eyes in his head."

So she sued for a divorce, and got it quite easily. Divorce is beautifully easy in the West.

When she was free, she had no longer any scruple about Ephraim. He lived at a town seven miles from her. She had a friend in that town. She paid her a visit. She let the other lady into her plans, and secured her co-operation. Mrs. X—— set it abroad that Mrs. Clarke was a widow; and, from one to another, Ephraim Slade was given to understand that a visit from him would be agreeable.

"Will it?" said Ephraim. "Then I'll go."

He called on her, and was received with a sweet, pensive tenderness. "Sit down, Ephraim—Mr. Slade," said she, softly and tremulously, and left the room. She had scarcely cleared it

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when he heard her tell the female servant, with a sharp, imperious tone, to admit no other visitors. It did not seem the same voice. She came back to him melodious. "The sight of you after so many years upset me," said she. Then, after a pause and a sigh, "You look well."

"Oh, yes, I am all right! We are neither of us quite so young as we were, you know."

"No, indeed" (with another sigh). "Well, dear friend, I suppose you have heard. I am punished, you see, for my want of courage and fidelity. I have always been punished. But you could not know that. Perhaps, after all, you have been the happier of the two. I am sure I hope you have."

"Well, I'll tell you, Mrs. Clarke," said he, in open, manly tones.

She stopped him. "Please don't call me Mrs. Clarke, when I have parted with the name forever; (*sotto voce*) call me Sophia."

"Well, then, Sophia, I'll tell you the truth. When you jilted me——"

"Oh!"

"And married Cl——who shall I say? Well, then, married *another*, because he had got more money than I had——"

"No, no. Ephraim, it was all my parents. But I will try and bear your reproaches. Go on."

"Well, then, of course I was awfully cut up. I was wild. I got a six-shooter to kill you and—the other."

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"I wish you had," said she. She didn't wish anything of the kind.

"I'm very glad I didn't, then. I dropped the six-shooter and took to the moping and crying line."

"Poor Ephraim!"

"Oh, yes! I went through all the changes, and ended as other men do."

"And how is that?"

"Why, by getting over it."

"What! you have got over it?"

"Lord, yes! long ago."

"Oh! in—deed!" said she, bitterly. Then, with sly incredulity, "How is it you have never married?"

"Well, I'll tell you. When I found that money was everything with you girls, I calculated to go in for money too. So I speculated, like—the other, and made money. But, when I had once begun to taste money-making, somehow I left off troubling about women. And, besides, I know a great many people, and I look coolly on, and what I see in every house has set me against marriage. Most of my married friends envy me, and say so. I don't envy any one of them, and don't pretend to. Marriage! It is a bad institution! You have got clear of it, I hear. All the better for you. I mean to take a shorter road: I won't ever get into it."

This churl, then, who had drowned hot passion in the waves of time, and, instead of nursing a passion for her all his days, had

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been hugging celibacy as man's choicest treasure, asked her coolly if there was anything he could do for her. Could he be of service in finding out investments, etc., or could he place either of the boys in the road to wealth? Instead of hating these poor children, like a man, he seemed all the more inclined to serve them that their absent parent had secured him the sweets of celibacy.

She was bursting with ire, but had the self-restraint to thank him, though very coldly, and to postpone all discussion of that kind to a future time. Then he shook hands with her, and left her.

She was wounded to the core. It would have been very hard to wound her heart as deeply as this interview wounded her pride.

She sat down, and shed tears of mortification.

She was aroused from that condition by a letter in a well-known hand. She opened it, all in a flutter:

"My Dear Sophy: You are a nice wife, you are. Here I have been slaving my life out for you, and shipwrecked, and nearly dead with a fever, and coming home rich again, and I asked you just to come from Chicago to New York to meet me, that have come all the way from China and San Francisco, and it is too much trouble. Did you ever hear of Lunham's dog that was so lazy he leaned against the wall to bark? It is very disheartening to a poor fellow that has played a man's part for you and the children. Now, be a good girl, and

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meet me at Chicago to-morrow at 6 P. M. For, if you don't, by thunder! I'll take the children and absquatulate with them to Paris, or somewhere. I find the drafts on New York I sent from China have never been presented. Reckon by that, you never got them. Has that raised your dander? Well, it is not my fault. So put on your bonnet, and come and meet

"Your affectionate husband,

"JONATHAN CLARKE.

"I sent my first letter to your father's house. I send this to your friend, Mrs. X——."

Mrs. Clarke read this in such a tumult of emotions that her mind could not settle a moment on one thing. But when she had read it, the blood in her beating veins began to run cold.

What on earth should she do? Fall to the ground between two stools? No—that was a man's trick, and she was a woman, every inch.

She had not any time to lose; so she came to a rapid conclusion. Her acts will explain better than comments. She dressed, packed up one box, drove to the branch station, and got to Chicago. She bought an exquisite bonnet, took private apartments at a hotel, and employed an intelligent person to wait for her husband at the station, and call out his name, and give him a card, on which was written:

.....
: MRS. JONATHAN CLARKE :
:

: At the X—— Hotel :
:.....

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This done, she gave her mind entirely to the decoration of her person.

The ancients, when they had done anything wrong, and wanted to be forgiven, used to approach their judges with dishevelled hair and shabby clothes—*sordidis vestibus*.

This poor shallow woman, unenlightened by the wisdom of the ancients, thought the nicer a woman looked, the likelier a man would be to forgive her, no matter what. So she put on her best silk dress, and her new French hat bought on purpose, and made her hair very neat, and gave her face a wash and a rub, that added colour. She did not rouge, because she calculated she should have to cry before the end of the play, and crying hard over rouge makes channels.

When she was as nice as could be, she sat down to wait for her *divorcé*. She might be compared to a fair spider which has spread her web to catch a wasp, but is sorely afraid that, when he does come, he will dash it all to ribbons.

The time came, and passed. An expected character is always as slow to come as a watched pot to boil.

At last there was a murmur on the stairs; then a loud, hearty voice; then a blow at the door—you could not call it a tap—and in burst Jonathan Clarke, brown as a berry, beard a foot long, genial and loud, open-hearted, Californian manners.

At sight of her, he gave a hearty "Ah!" and

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came at her with a rush to clasp her to his manly bosom, and knocked over a little gilt cane chair.

The lady, quaking internally and trembling from head to foot, received him like the awful Siddons, with one hand nobly extended, forbidding his profane advance. "A word first, if you please, sir."

Then Clarke stood transfixed, with one foot advanced and his arm in the air, like Ixion when Juno turned cloud.

"You have ordered me to come here, sir, and you have no longer any right to order me: but I am come, you see, to tell you my mind. What, do you really think a wife is to be deserted and abandoned, most likely for some other woman, and then be whistled back into her place like a dog? No man shall use *me* so."

"Why, what is the row? Has a mad dog bitten you, ye cantankerous critter?"

"Not a letter for ten months, that is the matter!" cried Mrs. Clarke, loud and aggressive.

"That is not my fault. I wrote three from China, and sent you two drafts on New York."

"It is easy to say so: I don't believe it." (Louder and aggressiver.)

CLARKE (bawling in his turn). "I don't care whether you believe it or not. Nobody but you calls Jony Clarke a liar."

MRS. CLARKE (competing in violence). "I believe one thing—that you were seen all about San Francisco with a lady. 'Twas to her you directed my letters and drafts: that is how I lost

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them. It is always the husband that is in fault, and not the post." (Very amicably all of a sudden): "How long were you in California after you came back from China?"

"Two months."

"How often did you write in that time?" (Sharply.)

"Well, you see, I was always expecting to start for home."

"You never wrote once!" (Very loud.)

"That was the reason."

"That and the lady!" (Screaming loud.)

"Stuff! Give me a kiss, and no more nonsense."

(Solemnly): "That I shall never do again. Husbands must be taught not to trifle with their wives' affections in this cruel way." (Tenderly): "Oh, Jonathan, how could you abandon me? What could you expect? I am not old; I am not ugly."

"Damn it all, if you have been playing any games"—and he felt instinctively for a bowie-knife.

"Sir!" said the lady, in an awful tone, that subjugated the monster directly.

"Well, then," said he, sullenly, "don't talk nonsense. Please remember we are man and wife."

MRS. CLARKE (very gravely). "Jonathan, we are not."

"If you are going into a passion, I won't tell you anything; I hate to be frightened. What language the man has picked up—in California!"

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"Well, that's neither here nor there. You go on."

"Well, Jonathan, you know I have always been under the influence of my parents. It was at their wish I married you."

"That is not what you told me at the time."

"Oh, yes, I did; only you have forgotten. Well, when no word came from you for so many months, my parents were indignant, and they worked upon me so and pestered me so—that—Jonathan, we are divorced."

The actress thought this was a good point to cry at, and cried accordingly.

Jonathan started at the announcement, swore a heartful, and then walked the room in rage and bitterness. "So, then," said he, "you leave the woman you love, and the children whose smiles are your heaven; you lead the life of a dog for them, and, when you come back, by God! the wife of your bosom has divorced you, just because a letter or two miscarried! That outweighs all you have done and suffered for her. Oh, you are crying, are you? What, you have given up facing it out, and laying the blame on me, have you?"

"Yes, dear; I find you were not to blame: it was—my parents."

"Your parents! Why, you are not a child, are you? You are the parent of my children, you little idiot! Have you forgotten that?"

"No. Oh! oh! oh! I have acted hastily, and very, very wrong."

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"Come, that is a good deal for a pretty woman to own. There, dry your eyes, and let us order dinner."

"What! dine with *you*?"

"Why, damn it, it is not the first time by a few thousand."

"La, Jonathan! I *should* like; but I *mustn't*."

"Why not?"

"I should be compromised."

"What, with me?"

"Yes—with any gentleman. Do try and realise the situation, dear. *I am a single woman.*"

Good Mr. Clarke—from California—delivered a string of curses so rapidly that they all ran into what Sir Walter calls a "clishmaclaver," even as when the ringers clash and jangle the church bells.

Mrs. Clarke gave him time; but as soon as he was in a state to listen quietly, compelled him to realise *her* situation. "You see," said she, "I am obliged to be very particular now. Delicacy demands it. You remember poor Ephraim Slade?"

"Your old sweetheart. Confound him! has he been after you again?"

"Why, Jonathan, ask yourself. He has remained unmarried ever since, and, when he heard I was free, of course he entertained hopes. But I kept him at a distance, and so" (tenderly and regretfully) "I must you. *I am a single woman.*"

"Look me in the face, Sophy. You won't dine with me?"

"I'd give the world, but I *mustn't*, dear."

"Not if I twist your neck round—darling—if you don't?"

"No, dear. You shall kill me, if you please. But I am a respectable woman, and I will not brave the world. But I know I have acted rashly, foolishly, ungratefully, and deserve to be killed. Kill me, dear—you'll forgive me then!" With that, she knelt down at his feet, crossed her hands over his knees, and looked up sweetly in his face with brimming eyes, waiting, yea, even requesting, to be killed.

He looked at her with glistening eyes. "You cunning hussy," said he, "you know I would not hurt a hair of your head. What is to be done? I tell you what it is, Sophy: I have lived three years without a wife, and that is enough. I won't live any longer so—no, not a day. It shall be you, or somebody else. Ah! what is that?—a bell. I'll ring, and order one. I've got lots of money. They are always to be had for that, you know."

"Oh, Jonathan! don't talk so. It is scandalous. How can you get a wife all in a minute by ringing?"

"If I can't, then the town-crier can. I'll hire him."

"For shame!"

"How is it to be, then? You that are so smart at dividing couples, you don't seem to be very clever in bringing 'em together again."

"It was my parents, Jonathan, not me. Well,

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dear, I always think when people are in a difficulty, the best thing is to go to some very *good* person for advice. Now, the best people are the clergymen. There is one in this street, number eighteen. Perhaps he could advise us."

Jonathan listened gravely for a little while, before he saw what she was at, but the moment he caught the idea so slyly conveyed he slapped his thigh and shouted out, "You are a sensible girl—come on!" And he almost dragged her to the clergyman. Not but what he found time to order a good dinner in the hall as they went.

The clergyman was out, but soon found. He remarried them, and they dined together man and wife.

They never mentioned grievances that night, and Jonathan said, afterward, his second bridal was worth a dozen of his first. For, the first time, she was a child, and had to be courted up-hill, but the second time she was a woman, and knew what to say to a fellow.

Next day Mr. and Mrs. Clarke went over to ——. They drove about in an open carriage for some hours, and did a heap of shopping. They passed by Ephraim Slade's place of business much oftener than there was any need, and slower. It was Mrs. Clarke who drove. Jonathan sat, and took it easy.

She drives to this day.

And Jonathan takes it easy.

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VOLUME XLII

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THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING*

BY

RUDYARD KIPLING

THE Law, as quoted, lays down a fair conduct of life, and one not easy to follow. I have been fellow to a beggar again and again under circumstances which prevented either of us finding out whether the other was worthy. I have still to be brother to a Prince, though I once came near to kinship with what might have been a veritable King and was promised the reversion of a Kingdom—army, law-courts, revenue and policy all complete. But, to-day, I greatly fear that my King is dead, and if I want a crown I must go and hunt it for myself.

The beginning of everything was in a railway train upon the road to Mhow from Ajmir. There had been a deficit in the Budget, which necessitated travelling, not Second-class, which is only half as dear as First-class, but by Intermediate, which is very awful indeed. There are no cushions in the Intermediate class, and the population are either Intermediate, which is Eurasian, or native, which for a long night journey is nasty; or Loafer, which is amusing though intoxicated. Intermediates do not patronise refreshment rooms. They carry their

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food in bundles and pots, and buy sweets from the native sweetmeat-sellers, and drink the roadside water. That is why in the hot weather Intermediates are taken out of the carriages dead, and in all weathers are most properly looked down upon.

My particular Intermediate happened to be empty till I reached Nasirabad, when a huge gentleman in shirt-sleeves entered, and, following the custom of Intermediates, passed the time of day. He was a wanderer and a vagabond like myself, but with an educated taste for whisky. He told tales of things he had seen and done, of out-of-the-way corners of the Empire into which he had penetrated, and of adventures in which he risked his life for a few days' food. "If India was filled with men like you and me, not knowing more than the crows where they'd get their next day's rations, it isn't seventy millions of revenue the land would be paying—it's seven hundred million," said he; and as I looked at his mouth and chin I was disposed to agree with him. We talked politics—the politics of Loaferdom that sees things from the underside where the lath and plaster is not smoothed off—and we talked postal arrangements because my friend wanted to send a telegram back from the next station to Ajmir, which is the turning-off place from the Bombay to the Mhow line as you travel westward. My friend had no money beyond eight annas which he wanted for dinner, and I had no money

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at all, owing to the hitch in the Budget before mentioned. Further, I was going into a wilderness where, though I should resume touch with the Treasury, there were no telegraph offices. I was, therefore, unable to help him in any way.

"We might threaten a Station-master, and make him send a wire on tick," said my friend, "but that'd mean inquiries for you and for me, and I've got my hands full these days. Did you say you are travelling back along this line within any days?"

"Within ten," I said.

"Can't you make it eight?" said he. "Mine is rather urgent business."

"I can send your telegram within ten days if that will serve you," I said.

"I couldn't trust the wire to fetch him now I think of it. It's this way. He leaves Delhi on the 23d for Bombay. That means he'll be running through Ajmir about the night of the 23d."

"But I'm going into the Indian Desert," I explained.

"Well *and* good," said he. "You'll be changing at Marwar Junction to get into Jodhpore territory—you must do that—and he'll be coming through Marwar Junction in the early morning of the 24th by the Bombay Mail. Can you be at Marwar Junction on that time? 'Twon't be inconveniencing you because I know that there's precious few pickings to be

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got out of these Central India States—even though you pretend to be correspondent of the *Backwoodsman*."

"Have you ever tried that trick?" I asked.

"Again and again, but the Residents find you out, and then you get escorted to the Border before you've time to get your knife into them. But about my friend here. I *must* give him a word o' mouth to tell him what's come to me or else he won't know where to go. I would take it more than kind of you if you was to come out of Central India in time to catch him at Marwar Junction, and say to him—'He has gone South for the week.' He'll know what that means. He's a big man with a red beard, and a great swell he is. You'll find him sleeping like a gentleman with all his luggage round him in a second-class compartment. But don't you be afraid. Slip down the window, and say—'He has gone South for the week,' and he'll tumble. It's only cutting your time of stay in those parts by two days. I ask you as a stranger—going to the West," he said with emphasis.

"Where have *you* come from?" said I.

"From the East," said he, "and I am hoping that you will give him the message on the Square—for the sake of my Mother as well as your own."

Englishmen are not usually softened by appeals to the memory of their mothers, but for certain reasons, which will be fully apparent, I saw fit to agree.

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"It's more than a little matter," said he, "and that's why I ask you to do it—and now I know that I can depend on you doing it. A second-class carriage at Marwar Junction, and a red-haired man asleep in it. You'll be sure to remember. I get out at the next station, and I must hold on there till he comes or sends me what I want."

"I'll give the message if I catch him," I said, "and for the sake of your Mother as well as mine I'll give you a word of advice. Don't try to run the Central India States just now as the correspondent of the *Backwoodsman*. There's a real one knocking about here, and it might lead to trouble."

"Thank you," said he simply, "and when will the swine be gone? I can't starve because he's ruining my work. I wanted to get hold of the Degumber Rajah down here about his father's widow, and give him a jump."

"What did he do to his father's widow, then?"

"Filled her up with red pepper and slipped her to death as she hung from a beam. I found that out myself and I'm the only man that would dare going into the State to get hush-money for it. They'll try to poison me, same as they did in Chortumna when I went on the loot there. But you'll give the man at Marwar Junction my message?"

He got out at a little roadside station, and I reflected. I had heard, more than once, of men personating correspondents of newspapers

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and bleeding small Native States with threats of exposure, but I had never met any of the caste before. They lead a hard life, and generally die with great suddenness. The Native States have a wholesome horror of English newspapers, which may throw light on their peculiar methods of government, and do their best to choke correspondents with champagne, or drive them out of their mind with four-in-hand barouches. They do not understand that nobody cares a straw for the internal administration of Native States so long as oppression and crime are kept within decent limits, and the ruler is not drugged, drunk, or diseased from one end of the year to the other. Native States were created by Providence in order to supply picturesque scenery, tigers and tall-writing. They are the dark places of the earth, full of unimaginable cruelty, touching the Railway and the Telegraph on one side, and, on the other, the days of Harun-al-Raschid. When I left the train I did business with divers Kings, and in eight days passed through many changes of life. Sometimes I wore dress-clothes and consorted with Princes and Politicals, drinking from crystal and eating from silver. Sometimes I lay out upon the ground and devoured what I could get, from a plate made of a flapjack, and drank the running water, and slept under the same rug as my servant. It was all in a day's work.

Then I headed for the Great Indian Desert

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upon the proper date, as I had promised, and the night Mail set me down at Marwar Junction, where a funny little, happy-go-lucky, native managed railway runs to Jodhpore. The Bombay Mail from Delhi makes a short halt at Marwar. She arrived as I got in, and I had just time to hurry to her platform and go down the carriages. There was only one second-class on the train. I slipped the window and looked down upon a flaming red beard, half covered by a railway rug. That was my man, fast asleep, and I dug him gently in the ribs. He woke with a grunt and I saw his face in the light of the lamps. It was a great and shining face.

"Tickets again?" said he.

"No," said I. "I am to tell you that he is gone South for the week. He is gone South for the week!"

The train had begun to move out. The red man rubbed his eyes. "He has gone South for the week," he repeated. "Now that's just like his impudence. Did he say that I was to give you anything? 'Cause I won't."

"He didn't," I said and dropped away, and watched the red lights die out in the dark. It was horribly cold because the wind was blowing off the sands. I climbed into my own train—not an Intermediate Carriage this time—and went to sleep.

If the man with the beard had given me a rupee I should have kept it as a memento of

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a rather curious affair. But the consciousness of having done my duty was my only reward.

Later on I reflected that two gentlemen like my friends could not do any good if they foregathered and personated correspondents of newspapers, and might, if they "stuck up" one of the little rat-trap states of Central India or Southern Rajputana, get themselves into serious difficulties. I therefore took some trouble to describe them as accurately as I could remember to people who would be interested in deporting them; and succeeded, so I was later informed, in having them headed back from the Degumber borders.

Then I became respectable, and returned to an Office where there were no Kings and no incidents except the daily manufacture of a newspaper. A newspaper office seems to attract every conceivable sort of person, to the prejudice of discipline. Zenana-mission ladies arrive, and beg that the Editor will instantly abandon all his duties to describe a Christian prize-giving in a back-slum of a perfectly inaccessible village; Colonels who have been overpassed for commands sit down and sketch the outline of a series of ten, twelve, or twenty-four leading articles on *Seniority versus Selection*; missionaries wish to know why they have not been permitted to escape from their regular vehicles of abuse and swear at a brother-missionary under special patronage of the editorial We; stranded theatrical companies troop up to explain that they cannot

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pay for their advertisements, but on their return from New Zealand or Tahiti will do so with interest; inventors of patent punkah-pulling machines, carriage couplings and unbreakable swords and axle-trees call with specifications in their pockets and hours at their disposal; tea-companies enter and elaborate their prospectuses with the office pens; secretaries of ball-committees clamour to have the glories of their last dance more fully expounded; strange ladies rustle in and say:—"I want a hundred lady's cards printed *at once*, please," which is manifestly part of an Editor's duty; and every dissolute ruffian that ever tramped the Grand Trunk Road makes it his business to ask for employment as a proof-reader. And, all the time, the telephone-bell is ringing madly, and Kings are being killed on the Continent, and Empires are saying, "You're another," and Mister Gladstone is calling down brimstone upon the British Dominions, and the little black copy-boys are whining, "*kaa-pi chayha-yeh*" (copy wanted) like tired bees, and most of the paper is as blank as Modred's shield.

But that is the amusing part of the year. There are other six months wherein none ever come to call, and the thermometer walks inch by inch up to the top of the glass, and the office is darkened to just above reading light, and the press machines are red-hot of touch, and nobody writes anything but accounts of amusements in the Hill-stations or obituary notices. Then the telephone becomes a tinkling terror, because it

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tells you of the sudden deaths of men and women that you knew intimately, and the prickly-heat covers you as with a garment, and you sit down and write:—"A slight increase of sickness is reported from the Khuda Janta Khan district. The outbreak is purely sporadic in its nature, and, thanks to the energetic efforts of the District authorities, is now almost at an end. It is, however, with deep regret we record the death, etc."

Then the sickness really breaks out, and the less recording and reporting the better for the peace of the subscribers. But the Empires and the Kings continue to divert themselves as selfishly as before, and the foreman thinks that a daily paper really ought to come out once in twenty-four hours, and all the people at the Hill-stations in the middle of their amusements say:—"Good gracious! Why can't the paper be sparkling? I'm sure there's plenty going on up here."

That is the dark half of the moon, and, as the advertisements say, "must be experienced to be appreciated."

It was in that season, and a remarkably evil season, that the paper began running the last issue of the week on Saturday night, which is to say Sunday morning, after the custom of a London paper. This was a great convenience, for immediately after the paper was put to bed, the dawn would lower the thermometer from 96° to almost 84° for almost half an hour, and in

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that chill—you have no idea how cold is 84° on the grass until you begin to pray for it—a very tired man could set off to sleep ere the heat roused him.

One Saturday night it was my pleasant duty to put the paper to bed alone. A King or courtier or a courtesan or a community was going to die or get a new Constitution, or do something that was important on the other side of the world, and the paper was to be held open till the latest possible minute in order to catch the telegram. It was a pitchy black night, as stifling as a June night can be, and the *loo*, the red-hot wind from the westward, was booming among the tinder-dry trees and pretending that the rain was on its heels. Now and again a spot of almost boiling water would fall on the dust with the flop of a frog, but all our weary world knew that was only pretence. It was a shade cooler in the press-room than the office, so I sat there, while the type ticked and clicked and the night-jars hooted at the windows, and the all but naked compositors wiped the sweat from their foreheads and called for water. The thing that was keeping us back, whatever it was, would not come off, though the *loo* dropped and the last type was set, and the whole round earth stood still in the choking heat, with its finger on its lip, to wait the event. I drowsed, and wondered whether the telegraph was a blessing, and whether this dying man, or struggling people, was aware of the inconvenience the delay

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was causing. There was no special reason beyond the heat and worry to make tension, but as the clock-hands crept up to three o'clock and the machines spun their fly-wheels two and three times to see that all was in order, before I said the word that would set them off, I could have shrieked aloud.

Then the roar and rattle of the wheels shivered the quiet into little bits. I rose to go away, but two men in white clothes stood in front of me. The first one said: "It's him!" The second said: "So it is!" And they both laughed almost as loudly as the machinery roared, and mopped their foreheads. "We see there was a light burning across the road and we were sleeping in that ditch there for coolness, and I said to my friend here, "The office is open. Let's come along and speak to him as turned us back from the Degumber State," said the smaller of the two. He was the man I had met in the Mhow train, and his fellow was the red-bearded man of Marwar Junction. There was no mistaking the eyebrows of the one or the beard of the other.

I was not pleased, because I wished to go to sleep, not to squabble with loafers. "What do you want?" I asked.

"Half an hour's talk with you cool and comfortable, in the office," said the red-bearded man. "We'd *like* some drink—the Contrack doesn't begin yet, Peachey, so you needn't look—but what we really want is advice. We

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don't want money. We ask you as a favour because you did us a bad turn about Degumber."

I led from the press-room to the stifling office with the maps on the walls, and the red-haired man rubbed his hands. "That's something like," said he. "This was the proper shop to come to. Now, Sir, let me introduce to you Brother Peachey Carnehan, that's him, and Brother Daniel Dravot, that is *me*, and the less said about our professions the better, for we have been most things in our time. Soldier, sailor, compositor, photographer, proof-reader, street-preacher, and correspondents of the *Backwoodsman* when we thought the paper wanted one. Carnehan is sober, and so am I. Look at us first and see that's sure. It will save you cutting into my talk. We'll take one of your cigars apiece, and you shall see us light."

I watched the test. The men were absolutely sober, so I gave them each a tepid peg.

"Well *and* good," said Carnehan of the eyebrows, wiping the froth from his moustache. "Let me talk now, Dan. We have been all over India, mostly on foot. We have been boiler-fitters, engine-drivers, petty contractors, and all that, and we have decided that India isn't big enough for such as us."

They certainly were too big for the office. Dravot's beard seemed to fill half the room and Carnehan's shoulders the other half, as they sat on the big table. Carnehan continued:—"The country isn't half worked out because

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they that governs it won't let you touch it. They spend all their blessed time in governing it, and you can't lift a spade, nor chip a rock, nor look for oil, nor anything like that without all the Government saying—"Leave it alone and let us govern." Therefore, such as it is, we will let it alone, and go away to some other place where a man isn't crowded and can come to his own. We are not little men, and there is nothing that we are afraid of except Drink, and we have signed a Contract on that. *Therefore*, we are going away to be Kings."

"Kings in our own right," muttered Dravot.

"Yes, of course," I said. "You've been tramping in the sun, and it's a very warm night, and hadn't you better sleep over the notion? Come to-morrow."

"Neither drunk nor sunstruck," said Dravot. "We have slept over the notion half a year, and require to see Books and Atlases, and we have decided that there is only one place now in the world that two strong men can *Sar-a-whack*. They call it Kafiristan. By my reckoning its the top right-hand corner of Afghanistan, not more than three hundred miles from Peshawar. They have two and thirty heathen idols there, and we'll be the thirty-third. It's a mountainous country, and the women of those parts are very beautiful."

"But that is provided against in the Contract," said Carnehan. "Neither Women nor Liqueur, Daniel."

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"And that's all we know, except that no one has gone there, and they fight, and in any place where they fight a man who knows how to drill men can always be a King. We shall go to those parts and say to any King we find—'D'you want to vanquish your foes?' and we will show him how to drill men; for that we know better than anything else. Then we will subvert that King and seize his Throne and establish a Dy-nasty."

"You'll be cut to pieces before you're fifty miles across the Border," I said. "You have to travel through Afghanistan to get to that country. It's one mass of mountains and peaks and glaciers, and no Englishman has been through it. The people are utter brutes, and even if you reached them you couldn't do anything."

"That's more like," said Carnehan. "If you could think us a little more mad we would be more pleased. We have come to you to know about this country, to read a book about it, and to be shown maps. We want you to tell us that we are fools and to show us your books." He turned to the book-cases.

"Are you at all in earnest?" I said.

"A little," said Dravot, sweetly. "As big a map as you have got, even if it's all blank where Kafiristan is, and any books you've got. We can read, though we aren't very educated."

I uncased the big thirty two-miles-to-the-inch map of India, and two smaller Frontier maps,

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hauled down volume INF-KAN of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and the men consulted them.

"See here!" said Dravot, his thumb on the map. "Up to Jagdallak, Peachey and me know the road. We was there with Roberts's Army. We'll have to turn off to the right at Jagdallak through Laghmann territory. Then we get among the hills—fourteen thousand feet—fifteen thousand—it will be cold work there, but it don't look very far on the map."

I handed him Wood on the *Sources of the Oxus*. Carnehan was deep in the *Encyclopædia*.

"They're a mixed lot," said Dravot, reflectively; "and it won't help us to know the names of their tribes. The more tribes the more they'll fight, and the better for us. From Jagdallak to Ashang. H'mm!"

"But all the information about the country is as sketchy and inaccurate as can be," I protested. "No one knows anything about it really. Here's the file of the *United Services' Institute*. Read what Bellew says."

"Blow Bellew!" said Carnehan. "Dan, they're an all-fired lot of heathens, but this book here says they think they're related to us English."

I smoked while the men pored over *Raverty*, *Wood*, the maps and the *Encyclopædia*.

"There is no use your waiting," said Dravot, politely. "It's about four o'clock now. We'll go before six o'clock if you want to sleep, and we won't steal any of the papers. Don't you sit up. We're two harmless lunatics, and if you come,

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to-morrow evening, down to the Serai we'll say good-by to you."

"You *are* two fools," I answered. "You'll be turned back at the Frontier or cut up the minute you set foot in Afghanistan. Do you want any money or a recommendation down-country? I can help you to the chance of work next week."

"Next week we shall be hard at work ourselves, thank you," said Dravot. "It isn't so easy being a King as it looks. When we've got our Kingdom in going order we'll let you know, and you can come up and help us to govern it."

"Would two lunatics make a Contract like that?" said Carnehan, with subdued pride, showing me a greasy half-sheet of note-paper on which was written the following. I copied it, then and there, as a curiosity:—

This Contract between me and you persuing witnesseth in the name of God—Amen and so forth.

(One) *That me and you will settle this matter together: i.e., to be Kings of Kafristan.*

(Two) *That you and me will not while this matter is being settled, look at any Liquor, nor any Woman black, white or brown, so as to get mixed up with one or the other harmful.*

(Three) *That we conduct ourselves with Dignity and Discretion, and if one of us gets into trouble the other will stay by him.*

Signed by you and me this day.

Peachey Taliaferro Carnehan.

Daniel Dravot.

Both Gentlemen at Large.

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"There was no need for the last article," said Carnehan, blushing modestly; "but it looks regular. Now you know the sort of men that loafers are—we *are* loafers, Dan, until we get out of India—and *do* you think that we could sign a Contrack like that unless we was in earnest? We have kept away from the two things that make life worth having."

"You won't enjoy your lives much longer if you are going to try this idiotic adventure. Don't set the office on fire," I said, "and go away before nine o'clock."

I left them still poring over the maps and making notes on the back of the "Contrack." "Be sure to come down to the Serai to-morrow," were their parting words.

The Kumharsen Serai is the great four-square sink of humanity where the strings of camels and horses from the North load and unload. All the nationalities of Central Asia may be found there, and most of the folk of India proper. Balkh and Bokhara there meet Bengal and Bombay, and try to draw eye-teeth. You can buy ponies, turquoises, Persian pussycats, saddle-bags, fat-tailed sheep, and musk in the Kumharsen Serai, and get many strange things for nothing. In the afternoon I went down there to see whether my friends intended to keep their word or were lying about drunk.

A priest attired in fragments of ribbons and rags stalked up to me, gravely twisting a child's paper whirligig. Behind him was his servant,

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bending under the load of a crate of mud toys. The two were loading up two camels, and the inhabitants of the Serai watched them with shrieks of laughter.

"The priest is mad," said a horse-dealer to me. "He is going up to Kabul to sell toys to the Amir. He will either be raised to honour or have his head cut off. He came in here this morning and has been behaving madly ever since."

"The witless are under the protection of God," stammered a flat-cheeked Usbeg in broken Hindi. "They foretell future events."

"Would they could have foretold that my caravan would have been cut up by the Shinwaris almost within shadow of the Pass!" grunted the Eusufzai agent of a Rajputana trading-house whose goods had been feloniously diverted into the hands of other robbers just across the Border, and whose misfortunes were the laughing-stock of the bazaar. "Ohé, priest, whence come you and whither do you go?"

"From Roum have I come," shouted the priest, waving his whirligig; "from Roum, blown by the breath of a hundred devils across the sea! O thieves, robbers, liars, the blessing of Pir Khan on pigs, dogs, and perjurers! Who will take the Protected of God to the North to sell charms that are never still to the Amir? The camels shall not gall, the sons shall not fall sick, and the wives shall remain faithful while they are away, of the men who give me place in

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their caravan. Who will assist me to slipper the King of the Roos with a golden slipper with a silver heel? The protection of Pir Kahn be upon his labours!" He spread out the skirts of his gaberdine and pirouetted between the lines of tethered horses.

"There starts a caravan from Peshawar to Kabul in twenty days, *Huzrut*," said the Eusufzai trader. "My camels go therewith. Do thou also go and bring us good luck."

"I will go even now!" shouted the priest. "I will depart upon my winged camels, and be at Peshawar in a day! Ho! Hazar Mir Khan." he yelled to his servant, "drive out the camels, but let me first mount my own."

He leaped on the back of his beast as it knelt, and turning round to me, cried:—

"Come thou also, Sahib, a little along the road, and I will sell thee a charm—an amulet that shall make thee King of Kafiristan."

Then the light broke upon me, and I followed the two camels out of the Serai till we reached open road and the priest halted.

"What d' you think o' that?" said he in English. "Carnehan can't talk their patter, so I've made him my servant. He makes a handsome servant. 'Tisn't for nothing that I've been knocking about the country for fourteen years. Didn't I do that talk neat? We'll hitch on to a caravan at Peshawar till we get to Jagdallak, and then we'll see if we can get donkeys for our camels, and strike into

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Kafiristan. Whirligigs for the Amir, O Lor! Put your hand under the camel-bags and tell me what you feel."

I felt the butt of a Martini, and another and another.

"Twenty of 'em," said Dravot, placidly.

"Twenty of 'em, and ammunition to correspond, under the whirligigs and the mud dolls."

"Heaven help you if you are caught with those things!" I said. "A Martini is worth her weight in silver among the Pathans."

"Fifteen hundred rupees of capital—every rupee we could beg, borrow, or steal—are invested on these two camels," said Dravot. "We won't get caught. We're going through the Khaiber with a regular caravan. Who'd touch a poor mad priest?"

"Have you got everything you want?" I asked, overcome with astonishment.

"Not yet, but we shall soon. Give us a momento of your kindness, *Brother*. You did me a service yesterday, and that time in Marwar. Half my Kingdom shall you have, as the saying is." I slipped a small charm compass from my watch-chain and handed it up to the priest.

"Good-bye," said Dravot, giving me his hand cautiously. "It's the last time we'll shake hands with an Englishman these many days. Shake hands with him, Carnehan," he cried, as the second camel passed me.

Carnehan looked down and shook hands. Then the camels passed away along the dusty

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road, and I was left alone to wonder. My eye could detect no failure in the disguises. The scene in the Serai attested that they were complete to the native mind. There was just the chance, therefore, that Carnehan and Dravot would be able to wander through Afghanistan without detection. But, beyond, they would find death, certain and awful death.

Ten days later a native friend of mine, giving me the news of the day from Peshawar, wound up his letter with:—"There has been much laughter here on account of a certain mad priest who is going in his estimation to sell petty gauds and insignificant trinkets which he ascribes as great charms to H. H. the Amir of Bokhara. He passed through Peshawar and associated himself to the Second Summer caravan that goes to Kabul. The merchants are pleased because through superstition they imagine that such mad fellows bring good-fortune."

The two then, were beyond the Border. I would have prayed for them, but, that night, a real King died in Europe, and demanded an obituary notice.

The wheel of the world swings through the same phases again and again. Summer passed and winter thereafter, and came and passed again. The daily paper continued and I with it, and upon the third summer there fell a hot night, a night-issue, and a strained waiting for some-

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thing to be telegraphed from the other side of the world, exactly as had happened before. A few great men had died in the past two years, the machines worked with more clatter, and some of the trees in the Office garden were a few feet taller. But that was all the difference.

I passed over to the press-room, and went through just such a scene as I have already described. The nervous tension was stronger than it had been two years before, and I felt the heat more acutely. At three o'clock I cried, "Print off," and turned to go, when there crept to my chair what was left of a man. He was bent into a circle, his head was sunk between his shoulders, and he moved his feet one over the other like a bear. I could hardly see whether he walked or crawled—this rag-wrapped, whining cripple who addressed me by name, crying that he was come back. "Can you give me a drink?" he whimpered. "For the Lord's sake, give me a drink!"

I went back to the office, the man following with groans of pain, and I turned up the lamp.

"Don't you know me?" he gasped, dropping into a chair, and he turned his drawn face, surmounted by a shock of gray hair, to the light.

I looked at him intently. Once before had I seen eyebrows that met over the nose in an inch-broad black band, but for the life of me I could not tell where.

"I don't know you," I said, handing him the whisky. "What can I do for you?"

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He took a gulp of the spirit raw, and shivered in spite of the suffocating heat.

"I've come back," he repeated; "and I was the King of Kafiristan—me and Dravot—crowned Kings we was! In this office we settled it—you setting there and giving us the books. I am Peachey—Peachey Taliaferro Carnehan, and you've been setting here ever since—O Lord!"

I was more than a little astonished, and expressed my feelings accordingly.

"It's true," said Carnehan, with a dry cackle, nursing his feet which were wrapped in rags. "True as gospel. Kings we were, with crowns upon our heads—me and Dravot—poor Dan—oh, poor, poor Dan, that would never take advice, not though I begged of him!"

"Take the whisky," I said, "and take your own time. Tell me all you can recollect of everything from beginning to end. You got across the border on your camels, Dravot dressed as a mad priest and you his servant. Do you remember that?"

"I ain't mad—yet, but I will be that way soon. Of course I remember. Keep looking at me, or maybe my words will go all to pieces. Keep looking at me in my eyes and don't say anything."

I leaned forward and looked into his face as steadily as I could. He dropped one hand upon the table and I grasped it by the wrist. It was twisted like a bird's claw, and upon

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the back was a ragged, red, diamond-shaped scar.

"No, don't look there. Look at *me*," said Carnehan.

"That comes afterwards, but for the Lord's sake don't distract me. We left with that caravan, me and Dravot, playing all sorts of antics to amuse the people we were with. Dravot used to make us laugh in the evenings when all the people was cooking their dinners—cooking their dinners, and . . . what did they do then? They lit little fires with sparks that went into Dravot's beard, and we all laughed—fit to die. Little red fires they was, going into Dravot's big red beard—so funny." His eyes left mine and he smiled foolishly.

"You went as far as Jagdallak with that caravan," I said at a venture, "after you had lit those fires. To Jagdallak, where you turned off to try to get into Kafirstan."

"No, we didn't neither. What are you talking about? We turned off before Jagdallak, because we heard the roads was good. But they wasn't good enough for our two camels—mine and Dravot's. When we left the caravan, Dravot took off all his clothes and mine too, and said we would be heathen, because the Kafirs didn't allow Mohammedans to talk to them. So we dressed betwixt and between, and such a sight as Daniel Dravot I never saw yet nor expect to see again. He burned half his beard, and slung a sheep-skin over his shoulder, and shaved his

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head into patterns. He shaved mine, too, and made me wear outrageous things to look like a heathen. That was in a most mountainous country, and our camels couldn't go along any more because of the mountains. They were tall and black, and coming home I saw them fight like wild goats—there are lots of goats in Kafiristan. And these mountains, they never keep still, no more than the goats. Always fighting they are, and don't let you sleep at night.

"Take some more whisky," I said, very slowly. "What did you and Daniel Dravot do when the camels could go no farther because of the rough roads that led into Kafiristan?"

"What did which do?" There was a party called Peachey Taliaferro Carnehan that was with Dravot. Shall I tell you about him? He died out there in the cold. Slap from the bridge fell old Peachey, turning and twisting in the air like a penny whirligig that you can sell to the Amir—No; they was two for three ha'pence, those whirligigs, or I am much mistaken and woful sore. And then these camels were no use, and Peachey said to Dravot—'For the Lord's sake, let's get out of this before our heads are chopped off,' and with that they killed the camels all among the mountains, not having anything in particular to eat, but first they took off the boxes with the guns and the ammunition, till two men came along driving four mules. Dravot up and dances in front of them, singing, 'Sell me four mules.' Says the first man,

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'If you are rich enough to buy, you are rich enough to rob;' but before ever he could put his hand to his knife, Dravot breaks his neck over his knee, and the other party runs away. So Carnehan loaded the mules with the rifles that was taken off the camels, and together we starts forward into those bitter cold mountainous parts, and never a road broader than the back of your hand."

He paused for a moment, while I asked him if he could remember the nature of the country through which he had journeyed.

"I am telling you as straight as I can, but my head isn't as good as it might be. They drove nails through it to make me hear better how Dravot died. The country was mountainous and the mules were most contrary, and the inhabitants was dispersed and solitary. They went up and up, and down and down, and that other party Carnehan, was imploring of Dravot not to sing and whistle so loud, for fear of bringing down the tremenjus avalanches. But Dravot says that if a King couldn't sing it wasn't worth being King, and whacked the mules over the rump, and never took no heed for ten cold days. We came to a big level valley all among the mountains, and the mules were near dead, so we killed them, not having anything in special for them or us to eat. We sat upon the boxes, and played odd and even with the cartridges that was jolted out.

"Then ten men with bows and arrows ran

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down that valley, chasing twenty men with bows and arrows, and the row was tremenjus. They was fair men—fairer than you or me—with yellow hair and remarkable well built. Says Dravot, unpacking the guns—‘This is the beginning of the business. We’ll fight for the ten men,’ and with that he fires two rifles at the twenty men, and drops one of them at two hundred yards from the rock where we was sitting. The other men began to run, but Carnehan and Dravot sits on the boxes picking them off at all ranges, up and down the valley. Then we goes up to the ten men that had run across the snow too, and they fires a footy little arrow at us. Dravot he shoots above their heads and they all falls down flat. Then he walks over them and kicks them, and then he lifts them up and shakes hands all around to make them friendly like. He calls them and gives them the boxes to carry, and waves his hand for all the world as though he was King already. They takes the boxes and him across the valley and up the hill into a pine wood on the top, where there was half a dozen big stone idols. Dravot he goes to the biggest—a fellow they call Imbra—and lays a rifle and a cartridge at his feet, rubbing his nose respectful with his own nose, patting him on the head, and saluting in front of it. He turns round to the men and nods his head, and says:—‘That’s all right. I’m in the know too, and these old jim-jams are my friends.’ Then he opens his mouth and points

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down it, and when the first man brings him food, he says—'No'; and when the second man brings him food, he says—'No'; but when one of the old priests and the boss of the village brings him food, he says—'Yes'; very haughty, and eats it slow. That was how we came to our first village, without any trouble, just as though we had tumbled from the skies. But we tumbled from one of those damned rope-bridges, you see, and you couldn't expect a man to laugh much after that."

"Take some more whisky and go on," I said. "That was the first village you came into. How did you get to be King?"

"I wasn't King," said Carnehan. "Dravot he was the King, and a handsome man he looked with the gold crown on his head and all. Him and the other party stayed in that village, and every morning Dravot sat by the side of old Imbra, and the people came and worshipped. That was Dravot's order. Then a lot of men came into the valley, and Carnehan and Dravot picks them off with the rifles before they knew where they was, and runs down into the valley and up again the other side, and finds another village, same as the first one, and the people all falls down flat on their faces, and Dravot says:—'Now what is the trouble between you two villages?' and the people points to a woman, as fair as you or me, that was carried off, and Dravot takes her back to the first village and counts up the dead—eight there was. For each

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dead man Dravot pours a little milk on the ground and waves his arms like a whirligig and, 'That's all right,' says he. Then he and Carnehan takes the big boss of each village by the arm and walks them down into the valley, and shows them how to scratch a line with a spear right down the valley, and gives each a sod of turf from both sides o' the line. Then all the people comes down and shouts like the devil and all, and Dravot says, 'Go and dig the land, and be fruitful and multiply,' which they did, though they didn't understand. Then we asks the names of things in their lingo—bread and water and fire and idols and such, and Dravot leads the priest of each village up to the idol, and says he must sit there and judge the people, and if anything goes wrong he is to be shot.

"Next week they was all turning up the land in the valley as quiet as bees and much prettier, and the priests heard all the complaints and told Dravot in dumb show what it was about. 'That's just the beginning,' says Dravot. 'They think we're gods.' He and Carnehan picks out twenty good men and shows them how to click off a rifle, and form fours, and advance in line, and they was very pleased to do so, and clever to see the hang of it. Then he takes out his pipe and his baccy-pouch and leaves one at one village, and one at the other, and off we two goes to see what was to be done in the next valley. That was all rock, and there was a

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little village there, and Carnehan says, 'Send 'em to the old valley to plant,' and takes 'em there and gives 'em some land that wasn't took before. They were a poor lot, and we blooded 'em with a kid before letting 'em into the new Kingdom. That was to impress the people, and then they settled down quiet, and Carnehan went back to Dravot who had got into another valley, all snow and ice and most mountainous. There was no people there and the Army got afraid, so Dravot shoots one of them, and goes on till he finds some people in a village, and the Army explains that unless the people wants to be killed they had better not shoot their little matchlocks, for they had matchlocks. We makes friends with the priest, and I stays there alone with two of the Army, teaching the men how to drill, and a thundering big Chief comes across the snow with kettledrums and horns twanging, because he heard there was a new god kicking about. Carnehan sights for the brown of the men half a mile across the snow and wings one of them. Then he sends a message to the Chief that, unless he wished to be killed, he must come and shake hands with me and leave his arms behind. The Chief comes alone first, and Carnehan shakes hands with him and whirls his arms about, same as Dravot used, and very much surprised that Chief was, and strokes my eyebrows. Then Carnehan goes alone to the Chief, and asks him in dumb show if he had an enemy he hated. 'I have,' says the

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Chief. So Carnehan weeds out the pick of his men, and sets the two of the Army to show them drill and at the end of two weeks the men can manœuvre about as well as Volunteers. So he marches with the Chief to a great big plain on the top of a mountain, and the Chief's men rushes into a village and takes it; we three Martinis firing into the brown of the enemy. So we took that village too, and I gives the Chief a rag from my coat and says, 'Occupy till I come': which was scriptural. By way of a reminder, when me and the Army was eighteen hundred yards away, I drops a bullet near him standing on the snow, and all the people falls flat on their faces. Then I sends a letter to Dravot, where he be by land or by sea."

At the risk of throwing the creature out of train I interrupted, "How could you write a letter up yonder?"

"The letter?—Oh!—The letter! Keep looking at me between the eyes, please. It was a string-talk letter, that we'd learned the way of it from a blind beggar in the Punjab."

I remember that there had once come to the office a blind man with a knotted twig and a piece of string which he wound round the twig according to some cypher of his own. He could, after the lapse of days or hours, repeat the sentence which he had reeled up. He had reduced the alphabet to eleven primitive sounds; and tried to teach me his method, but failed.

"I sent that letter to Dravot," said Carnehan;

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"and told him to come back because this Kingdom was growing too big for me to handle, and then I struck for the first valley, to see how the priests were working. They called the village we took along with the Chief, Bashkai, and the first village we took, Er-Heb. The priest at Er-Heb was doing all right, but they had a lot of pending cases about land to show me, and some men from another village had been firing arrows at night. I went out and looked for that village and fired four rounds at it from a thousand yards. That used all the cartridges I cared to spend, and I waited for Dravot, who had been away two or three months, and I kept my people quiet.

"One morning I heard the devil's own noise of drums and horns, and Dan Dravot marched down the hill with his Army and a tail of hundreds of men, and, which was the most amazing—a great gold crown on his head. 'My Gord, Carnehan,' says Daniel, 'this is a tremenjuss business, and we've got the whole country as far as it's worth having. I am the son of Alexander by Queen Semiramis, and you're my younger brother and a god too! It's the biggest thing we've ever seen. I've been marching and fighting for six weeks with the Army, and every footy little village for fifty miles has come in rejoiceful; and more than that, I've got the key of the whole show, as you'll see, and I've got a crown for you! I told 'em to make two of 'em at a place called Shu, where the gold lies in the

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rock like suet in mutton. Gold I've seen, and turquoise I've kicked out of the cliffs, and there's garnets in the sands of the river, and here's a chunk of amber that a man brought me. Call up all the priests and, here, take your crown.'

"One of the men opens a black hair bag and I slips the crown on. It was too small and too heavy, but I wore it for the glory. Hammered gold it was—five pound weight, like a hoop of a barrel.

"'Peachey,' says Dravot, 'we don't want to fight no more. The Craft's the trick so help me!' and he brings forward that same Chief that I left at Bashkai—Billy Fish we called him afterwards, because he was so like Billy Fish that drove the big tank-engine at Mach on the Bolan in the old days. 'Shake hands with him,' says Dravot, and I shook hands and nearly dropped, for Billy Fish gave me the Grip. I said nothing, but tried him with the Fellow Craft Grip. He answers, all right, and I tried the Master's Grip, but that was a slip. 'A Fellow Craft he is!' I says to Dan. 'Does he know the word?' 'He does,' says Dan, 'and all the priests know. It's a miracle! The Chiefs and the priest can work a Fellow Craft Lodge in a way that's very like ours, and they've cut the marks on the rocks, but they don't know the Third Degree, and they've come to find out. It's Gord's Truth. I've known these long years that the Afghans knew up to the Fellow Craft Degree, but this is a miracle

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A god and a Grand-Master of the Craft am I, and a Lodge in the Third Degree I will open, and we'll raise the head priests and the Chiefs of the villages.'

"'It's against all the law,' I says, 'holding a Lodge without warrant from any one; and we never held office in any lodge.'

"'It's a master-stroke of policy,' says Dravot. 'It means running the country as easy as a four-wheeled bogy on a down grade. We can't stop to inquire now, or they'll turn against us. I've forty Chiefs at my heel, and passed and raised according to their merit they shall be. Billet these men on the villages and see that we run up a Lodge of some kind. The temple of Imbra will do for the Lodge-room. The women must make aprons as you show them. I'll hold a levee of Chiefs to-night and Lodge to-morrow.'

"I was fair run off my legs, but I wasn't such a fool as not to see what a pull this Craft business gave us. I showed the priests' families how to make aprons of the degrees, but for Dravot's apron the blue border and marks was made of turquoise lumps on white hide, not cloth. We took a great square stone in the temple for the Master's chair, and little stones for the officers' chairs, and painted the black pavement with white squares, and did what we could to make things regular.

"At the levee which was held that night on the hillside with big bonfires, Dravot gives out

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that him and me were gods and sons of Alexander, and Past Grand-Masters in the Craft, and was come to make Kafiristan a country where every man should eat in peace and drink in quiet, and specially obey us. Then the Chiefs come round to shake hands, and they was so hairy and white and fair it was just shaking hands with old friends. We gave them names according as they was like men we had known in India—Billy Fish, Holly Dilworth, Pikky Kergan that was Bazaar-master when I was at Mhow, and so on, and so on.

"*The* most amazing miracle was at Lodge next night. One of the old priests was watching us continuous, and I felt uneasy, for I knew we'd have to fudge the Ritual, and I didn't know what the men knew. The old priest was a stranger come in from beyond the village of Bashkai. The minute Dravot puts on the Master's apron that the girls had made for him, the priest fetches a whoop and a howl, and tries to overturn the stone that Dravot was sitting on 'It's all up now,' I says. 'That comes of meddling with the Craft without warrant!' Dravot never winked an eye, not when ten priests took and tilted over the Grand-Master's chair—which was to say the stone of Imbra. The priest begins rubbing the bottom end of it to clear away the black dirt, and presently he shows all the other priests the Master's Mark, same as was on Dravot's apron, cut into the stone. Not even the priests of the temple of

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Imbra knew it was there. The old chap falls flat on his face at Dravot's feet and kisses 'em. 'Luck again,' says Dravot, across the Lodge to me, 'they say it's the missing Mark that no one could understand the why of. We're more than safe now.' Then he bangs the butt of his gun for a gavel and says—'By virtue of the authority vested in me by my own right hand and the help of Peachey, I declare myself Grand-Master of all Freemasonry in Kafiristan in this the Mother Lodge o' the country, and King of Kafiristan equally with Peachey!' At that he puts on his crown and I puts on mine—I was doing Senior Warden—and we opens the Lodge in most ample form. It was a amazing miracle! The priests moved in Lodge through the first two degrees almost without telling, as if the memory was coming back to them. After that, Peachey and Dravot raised such as was worthy—high priests and Chiefs of far-off villages. Billy Fish was the first, and I can tell you we scared the soul out of him. It was not in any way according to Ritual, but it served our turn. We didn't raise more than ten of the biggest men because we didn't want to make the Degree common. And they was clamouring to be raised.

“‘In another six months,’ says Dravot, ‘we’ll hold another Communication and see how you are working.’ Then he asks them about their villages, and learns that they was fighting one against the other and were fair

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sick and tired of it. And when they wasn't doing that they was fighting with the Mohammedans. 'You can fight those when they come into our country,' says Dravot. 'Tell off every tenth man of your tribes for a Frontier guard, and send two hundred at a time to this valley to be drilled. Nobody is going to be shot or speared any more so long as he does well, and I know that you won't cheat me because you're white people—sons of Alexander—and not like common, black Mohammedans. You are *my* people and by God,' says he, running off into English at the end—'I'll make a damned fine Nation of you, or I'll die in the making!'

"I can't tell all we did for the next six months because Dravot did a lot I couldn't see the hang of, and he learned their lingo in a way I never could. My work was to help the people plough, and now and again to go out with some of the Army and see what the other villages were doing, and make 'em throw rope-bridges across the ravines which cut up the country horrid. Dravot was very kind to me, but when he walked up and down in the pine wood pulling that bloody red beard of his with both fists I knew he was thinking plans I could not advise him about, and I just waited for orders.

"But Dravot never showed me disrespect before the people. They were afraid of me and the Army, but they loved Dan. He was the best of friends with the priests and the Chiefs, but any one could come across the hills

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with a complaint and Dravot would hear him out fair, and call four priests together and say what was to be done. He used to call in Billy Fish from Bashkai, and Pikky Kergan from Shu, and an old Chief we called Kafuzelum—it was like enough to his real name—and hold councils with 'em when there was any fighting to be done in small villages. That was his Council of War, and the four priests of Bashkai, Shu, Khawak, and Madora was his Privy Council. Between the lot of 'em they sent me, with forty men and twenty rifles, and sixty men carrying turquoises, into the Ghorband country to buy those hand-made Martini rifles, that come out of the Amir's workshops at Kabul, from one of the Amir's Herati regiments that would have sold the very teeth out of their mouths for turquoises.

"I stayed in Ghorband a month, and gave the Governor the pick of my baskets for hush-money, and bribed the colonel of the regiment some more, and, between the two and the tribespeople, we got more than a hundred hand-made Martinis, a hundred good Kohat Jezails that'll throw to six hundred yards, and forty manloads of very bad ammunition for the rifles. I came back with what I had, and distributed 'em among the men that the Chiefs sent in to me to drill. Dravot was too busy to attend to those things, but the old Army that we first made helped me, and we turned out five hundred men that could drill, and two hundred that knew

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how to hold arms pretty straight. Even those cork-screwed, hand-made guns was a miracle to them. Dravot talked big about powder-shops and factories, walking up and down in the pine wood when the winter was coming on.

“‘I won’t make a Nation,’ says he. ‘I’ll make an Empire! These men aren’t niggers; they’re English! Look at their eyes—look at their mouths. Look at the way they stand up. They sit on chairs in their own houses. They’re the Lost Tribes, or something like it, and they’ve grown to be English. I’ll take a census in the spring if the priests don’t get frightened. There must be a fair two million of ’em in these hills. The villages are full o’ little children. Two million people—two hundred and fifty thousand fighting men—and all English! They only want the rifles and a little drilling. Two hundred and fifty thousand men, ready to cut in on Russia’s right flank when she tries for India! Peachey, man,’ he says, chewing his beard in great hunks, ‘we shall be Emperors—Emperors of the Earth! Rajah Brooke will be a suckling to us. I’ll treat with the Viceroy on equal terms. I’ll ask him to send me twelve picked English—twelve that I know of—to help us govern a bit. There’s Mackray, Sergeant-pensioner at Segowli—many’s the good dinner he’s given me, and his wife a pair of trousers. There’s Donkin, the Warder of Tounghoo Jail; there’s hundreds that I could lay my hand on if I was in India. The Viceroy shall do it

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for me. I'll send a man through in the spring for those men, and I'll write for a dispensation from the Grand Lodge for what I've done as Grand-Master. That—and all the Sniders that'll be thrown out when the native troops in India take up the Martini. They'll be worn smooth, but they'll do for fighting in these hills. Twelve English, a hundred thousand Sniders run through the Amir's country in dribblets—I'd be content with twenty thousand in one year—and we'd be an Empire. When everything was ship-shape, I'd hand over the crown—this crown I'm wearing now—to Queen Victoria on my knees, and she'd say—"Rise up, Sir Daniel Dravot." Oh, it's big! It's big, I tell you! But there's so much to be done in every place—Bashkai, Khawak, Shu, and everywhere else.'

"'What is it?' I says. 'There are no more men coming in to be drilled this autumn. Look at those fat, black clouds. They're bringing the snow.'

"'It isn't that,' says Daniel, putting his hand very hard on my shoulder; 'and I don't wish to say anything that's against you, for no other living man would have followed me and made me what I am as you have done. You're a first-class Commander-in-Chief, and the people know you; but—it's a big country, and somehow you can't help me, Peachey, in the way I want to be helped.'

"'Go to your blasted priests, then!' I said, and I was sorry when I made that remark,

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but it did hurt me sore to find Daniel talking so superior when I'd drilled all the men, and done all he told me.

“‘Don't let's quarrel, Peachey,' says Daniel without cursing. ‘You're a King too, and the half of this Kingdom is yours; but can't you see, Peachey, we want cleverer men than us now—three or four of 'em that we can scatter about for our Deputies? It's a hugeous great State, and I can't always tell the right thing to do, and I haven't time for all I want to do, and here's the winter coming on and all.’ He put half his beard into his mouth, and it was as red as the gold of his crown.

“‘I'm sorry, Daniel,' says I. ‘I've done all I could. I've drilled the men, and shown the people how to stack their oats better, and I've brought in those tinware rifles from Ghorband—but I know what you're driving at. I take it Kings always feel oppressed that way.’

“‘There's another thing too,' says Dravot, walking up and down. ‘The winter's coming and these people won't be giving much trouble, and if they do we can't move about. I want a wife.’

“‘For Gord's sake leave the women alone!’ I says. ‘We've both got all the work we can, though I *am* a fool. Remember the Contrack, and keep clear o' women.’

“‘The Contrack only lasted till such time as we was Kings; and Kings we have been these months past,’ says Dravot, weighing his crown

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in his hand. 'You go get a wife too, Peachey—a nice, strappin', plump girl that'll keep you warm in the winter. They're prettier than English girls, and we can take the pick of 'em. Boil 'em once or twice in hot water, and they'll come as fair as chicken and ham.'

"'Don't tempt me!' I says. 'I will not have any dealings with a woman not till we are a dam' side more settled than we are now. I've been doing the work o' two men, and you've been doing the work o' three. Let's lie off a bit, and see if we can get some better tobacco from Afghan country and run in some good liquor; but no women.'

"'Who's talking o' *women*?' says Dravot. 'I said *wife*—a Queen to breed a King's son for the King. A Queen out of the strongest tribe, that'll make them your blood-brothers, and that'll lie by your side and tell you all the people thinks about you and their own affairs. That's what I want.'

"'Do you remember that Bengali woman I kept at Mogul Serai when I was plate-layer?' says I. 'A fat lot o' good she was to me. She taught me the lingo and one or two other things; but what happened? She ran away with the Station Master's servant and half my month's pay. Then she turned up at Dadur Junction in tow of a half-caste, and had the impudence to say I was her husband—all among the drivers of the running-shed!'

"'We've done with that,' says Dravot. 'These

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women are whiter than you or me, and a Queen I will have for the winter months.'

"'For the last time o' asking, Dan, do *not*,' I says. 'It'll only bring us harm. The Bible says that Kings ain't to waste their strength on women, 'specially when they've got a new, raw Kingdom to work over.

"'For the last time of answering, I will,' said Dravot, and he went away through the pine-trees looking like a big red devil. The low sun hit his crown and beard on one side, and the two blazed like hot coals.

"But getting a wife was not as easy as Dan thought. He put it before the Council, and there was no answer till Billy Fish said that he'd better ask the girls. Dravot damned them all round. 'What's wrong with me?' he shouts, standing by the idol Imbra. 'Am I a dog or am I not enough of a man for your wenches? Haven't I put the shadow of my hand over this country? Who stopped the last Afghan raid?' It was me really, but Dravot was too angry to remember. 'Who bought your guns? Who repaired the bridges? Who's the Grand-Master of the sign cut in the stone?' and he thumped his hand on the block that he used to sit on in Lodge, and at Council, which opened like Lodge always. Billy Fish said nothing and no more did the others. 'Keep your hair on, Dan,' said I; 'and ask the girls. That's how it's done at home, and these people are quite English.'

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“‘The marriage of a King is a matter of State,’ says Dan, in a white-hot rage, for he could feel, I hope, that he was going against his better mind. He walked out of the Council-room, and the others sat still, looking at the ground.

“‘Billy Fish,’ says I to the Chief of Bashkai, ‘what’s the difficulty here? A straight answer to a true friend.’ ‘You know,’ says Billy Fish. ‘How should a man tell you who know everything? How can daughters of men marry gods or devils? It’s not proper.’

“‘I remembered something like that in the Bible; but if, after seeing us as long as they had, they still believed we were gods, it wasn’t for me to undeceive them.

“‘A god can do anything,’ says I. ‘If the King is fond of a girl he’ll not let her die.’ ‘She’ll have to,’ said Billy Fish. ‘There are all sorts of gods and devils in these mountains, and now and again a girl marries one of them and isn’t seen any more. Besides, you two know the Mark cut in the stone. Only the gods know that. We thought you were men till you showed the sign of the Master.’

“‘I wished then that we had explained about the loss of the genuine secrets of a Master-Mason at the first go-off; but I said nothing. All that night there was a blowing of horns in a little dark temple half-way down the hill, and I heard a girl crying fit to die. One of the priests told us that she was being prepared to marry the King.

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“‘I’ll have no nonsense of that kind,’ says Dan. ‘I don’t want to interfere with your customs, but I’ll take my own wife.’ ‘The girl’s a little bit afraid,’ says the priest. ‘She thinks she’s going to die, and they are a-heartening of her up down in the temple.’

“‘Hearten her very tender, then,’ says Dravot, ‘or I’ll hearten you with the butt of a gun so that you’ll never want to be heartened again.’ He licked his lips, did Dan, and stayed up walking about more than half the night, thinking of the wife that he was going to get in the morning. I wasn’t any means comfortable, for I knew that dealings with a woman in foreign parts, though you was a crowned King twenty times over, could not but be risky. I got up very early in the morning while Dravot was asleep, and I saw the priests talking together in whispers, and the Chiefs talking together too, and they looked at me out of the corners of their eyes.

“‘What is up, Fish?’ I says to the Bashkai man, who was wrapped up in his furs and looking splendid to behold.

“‘I can’t rightly say,’ says he; ‘but if you can induce the King to drop all this nonsense about marriage, you’ll be doing him and me and yourself a great service.’

“‘That I do believe,’ says I. ‘But sure, you know, Billy, as well as me, having fought against and for us, that the King and me are nothing more than two of the finest men that God

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Almighty ever made. Nothing more, I do assure you.'

"‘That may be,’ says Billy Fish, ‘and yet I should be sorry if it was.’ He sinks his head upon his great fur cloak for a minute and thinks. ‘King’ says he, ‘be you man or god or devil, I’ll stick by you to-day. I have twenty of my men with me, and they will follow me. We’ll go to Bashkai until the storm blows over.’

"A little snow had fallen in the night, and everything was white except the greasy fat clouds that blew down and down from the north. Dravot came out with his crown on his head, swinging his arms and stamping his feet, and looking more pleased than Punch.

"‘For the last time, drop it, Dan,’ says I in a whisper. ‘Billy Fish says that there will be a row.’

"‘A row among my people!’ says Dravot. ‘Not much. Peachey, you’re a fool not to get a wife, too. Where’s the girl?’ says he with a voice as loud as the braying of a jackass. ‘Call up all the Chiefs and priests, and let the Emperor see if his wife suits him.’

"There was no need to call any one. They were all there leaning on their guns and spears round the clearing in the centre of the pine wood. A deputation of priests went down to the little temple to bring up the girl, and the horns blew up fit to wake the dead. Billy Fish saunters round and gets as close to Daniel as he could, and behind him stood his twenty men

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with matchlocks. Not a man of them under six feet. I was next to Dravot, and behind me was twenty men of the regular Army. Up comes the girl, and a strapping wench she was, covered with silver and turquoises but white as death, and looking back every minute at the priests.

“‘She’ll do,’ said Dan, looking her over. ‘What’s to be afraid of, lass? Come and kiss me.’ He puts his arm round her. She shuts her eyes, gives a bit of a squeak, and down goes her face in the side of Dan’s flaming red beard.

“‘The slut’s bitten me!’ says he, clapping his hand to his neck, and, sure enough, his hand was red with blood. Billy Fish and two of his matchlock-men catches hold of Dan by the shoulders and drags him into the Bashkai lot, while the priests howls in their lingo,—‘Neither god nor devil but a man!’ I was all taken aback, for a priest cut at me in front, and the Army behind began firing into the Bashkai men.

“‘God A-mighty!’ says Dan. ‘What is the meaning o’ this?’

“‘Come back! Come away!’ says Billy Fish. ‘Ruin and Mutiny is the matter. We’ll break for Bashkai if we can.’

“‘I tried to give some sort of orders to my men—the men o’ the regular Army—but it was no use, so I fired into the brown of ’em with an English Martini and drilled three beggars in a line. The valley was full of shout-

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ing, howling creatures, and every soul was shrieking, 'Not a god nor a devil but only a man!' The Bashkai troops stuck to Billy Fish all they were worth, but their matchlocks wasn't half as good as the Kabul breech-loaders, and four of them dropped. Dan was bellowing like a bull, for he was very wrathful; and Billy Fish had a hard job to prevent him running out at the crowd.

"'We can't stand,' says Billy Fish. 'Make a run for it down the valley! The whole place is against us.' The matchlock-men ran, and we went down the valley in spite of Dravot's protestations. He was swearing horribly and crying out that he was a King. The priests rolled great stones on us, and the regular Army fired hard, and there wasn't more than six men, not counting Dan, Billy Fish, and Me, that came down to the bottom of the valley alive.

"'Then they stopped firing and the horns in the temple blew again. 'Come away—for Gord's sake come away!' says Billy Fish. 'They'll send runners out to all the villages before ever we get to Bashkai. I can protect you there, but I can't do anything now.'

"My own notion is that Dan began to go mad in his head that hour. He stared up and down like a stuck pig. Then he was all for walking back alone and killing the priests with his bare hands; which he could have done. 'An Emperor am I,' says Daniel, 'and next year I shall be a Knight of the Queen.'

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“‘All right, Dan,’ says I; ‘but come along now while there’s time.’

“‘It’s your fault,’ says he, ‘for not looking after your Army better. There was mutiny in the midst, and you didn’t know—you damned engine-driving, plate-laying, missionary’s-pass-hunting hound!’ He sat upon a rock and called me every foul name he could lay tongue to. I was too heartsick to care, though it was all his foolishness that brought the smash.

“‘I’m sorry, Dan,’ says I, ‘but there’s no accounting for natives. This business is our Fifty-Seven. Maybe we’ll make something out of it yet, when we’ve got to Bashkai.’

“‘Let’s get to Bashkai, then,’ says Dan, ‘and, by God, when I come back here again I’ll sweep the valley so there isn’t a bug in a blanket left!’

“‘We walked all that day, and all that night Dan was stumping up and down on the snow, chewing his beard and muttering to himself.

“‘There’s no hope o’ getting clear,’ said Billy Fish. ‘The priests will have sent runners to the villages to say that you are only men. Why didn’t you stick on as gods till things was more settled? I’m a dead man,’ says Billy Fish, and he throws himself down on the snow and begins to pray to his gods.

“‘Next morning we was in a cruel bad country—all up and down, no level ground at all, and no food either. The six Bashkai men looked at Billy Fish hungry-wise as if they wanted to

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ask something, but they said never a word. At noon we came to the top of a flat mountain all covered with snow, and when we climbed up into it, behold, there was an army in position waiting in the middle!

“‘The runners have been very quick,’ says Billy Fish, with a little bit of a laugh. ‘They are waiting for us.’

“‘Three or four men began to fire from the enemy’s side, and a chance shot took Daniel in the calf of the leg. That brought him to his senses. He looks across the snow at the Army, and sees the rifles that we had brought into the country.

“‘We’re done for,’ says he. ‘They are Englishmen, these people—and it’s my blasted nonsense that has brought you to this. Get back, Billy Fish, and take your men away; you’ve done what you could, and now cut for it. Carnehan,’ says he, ‘shake hands with me and go along with Billy. Maybe they won’t kill you. I’ll go and meet ’em alone. It’s me that did it. Me, the King!’

“‘Go!’ says I. ‘Go to Hell, Dan. I’m with you here. Billy Fish, you clear out, and we two will meet those folk.’

“‘I’m a Chief,’ says Billy Fish, quite quiet. ‘I stay with you. My men can go.’

“The Bashkai fellows didn’t wait for a second word, but ran off, and Dan and Me and Billy Fish walked across to where the drums were drumming and the horns were horning. It was

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cold—awful cold. I've got that cold in the back of my head now. There's a lump of it there."

The punkah-coolies had gone to sleep. Two kerosene lamps were blazing in the office, and the perspiration poured down my face and splashed on the blotter as I leaned forward. Carnehan was shivering, and I feared that his mind might go. I wiped my face, took a fresh grip of the piteously mangled hands, and said:—"What happened after that?"

The momentary shift of my eyes had broken the clear current.

"What was you pleased to say?" whined Carnehan. "They took them without any sound. Not a little whisper all along the snow, not though the King knocked down the first man that set hand on him—not though old Peachey fired his last cartridge into the brown of 'em. Not a single solitary sound did those swines make. They just closed up tight, and I tell you their furs stunk. There was a man called Billy Fish, a good friend of us all, and they cut his throat, Sir, then and there, like a pig; and the King kicks up the bloody snow and says:—'We've had a dashed fine run for our money. What's coming next?' But Peachey, Peachey Taliaferro, I tell you, Sir, in confidence as betwixt two friends, he lost his head, Sir. No, he didn't neither. The King lost his head, so he did, all along o' one of those cunning rope-bridges. Kindly let me have the

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paper-cutter, Sir. It tilted this way. They marched him a mile across that snow to a rope-bridge over a ravine with a river at the bottom. You may have seen such. They prodded him behind like an ox. 'Damn your eyes!' says the King. 'D'you suppose I can't die like a gentleman?' He turns to Peachey—Peachey that was crying like a child. 'I've brought you to this, Peachey,' says he. 'Brought you out of your happy life to be killed in Kafirstan, where you was late Commander-in-Chief of the Emperor's forces. Say you forgive me, Peachey.' 'I do,' says Peachey. 'Fully and freely do I forgive you, Dan.' 'Shake hands, Peachey,' says he. 'I'm going now.' Out he goes, looking neither right nor left, and when he was plumb in the middle of those dizzy dancing ropes, 'Cut, you beggars,' he shouts; and they cut, and old Dan fell, turning round and round and round, twenty thousand miles, for he took half an hour to fall till he struck the water, and I could see his body caught on a rock with the gold crown close beside.

"But do you know what they did to Peachey between two pine-trees? They crucified him, sir, as Peachey's hands will show. They used wooden pegs for his hands and his feet; and he didn't die. He hung there and screamed, and they took him down next day, and said it was a miracle that he wasn't dead. They took him down—poor, old Peachey that hadn't done them any harm—that hadn't done them any . . ."

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He rocked to and fro and wept bitterly, wiping his eyes with the back of his scarred hands and moaning like a child for some ten minutes.

"They was cruel enough to feed him up in the temple, because they said he was more of a god than old Daniel that was a man. Then they turned him out on the snow, and told him to go home, and Peachey came home in about a year, begging along the roads quite safe; for Daniel Dravot he walked before and said:—'Come along, Peachey. It's a big thing we're doing.' The mountains they danced at night, and the mountains they tried to fall on Peachey's head, but Dan he held up his hand, and Peachey came along bent double. He never let go of Dan's hand, and he never let go of Dan's head. They gave it to him as a present in the temple, to remind him not to come again, and though the crown was pure gold, and Peachey was starving, never would Peachey sell the same. You knew Dravot, sir! You knew Right Worshipful Brother Dravot! Look at him now!"

He fumbled in the mass of rags round his bent waist; brought out a black horsehair bag embroidered with silver thread; and shook therefrom on to my table—the dried, withered head of Daniel Dravot! The morning sun that had long been paling the lamps struck the red beard and blind, sunken eyes; struck, too, a heavy circlet of gold studded with raw turquoises,

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that Carnehan placed tenderly on the battered temples.

"You behold now," said Carnehan, "the Emperor in his habit as he lived—the King of Kafiristan with his crown upon his head. Poor old Daniel that was a monarch once!"

I shuddered, for, in spite of defacements manifold, I recognised the head of the man of Marwar Junction. Carnehan rose to go. I attempted to stop him. He was not fit to walk abroad. "Let me take away the whisky, and give me a little money," he gasped. "I was a King once. I'll go to the Deputy Commissioner and ask to set in the Poorhouse till I get my health. No, thank you, I can't wait till you get a carriage for me. I've urgent private affairs—in the south—at Marwar."

He shambled out of the office and departed in the direction of the Deputy Commissioner's house. That day at noon I had occasion to go down the blinding hot Mall, and I saw a crooked man crawling along the white dust of the roadside, his hat in his hand, quavering dolorously after the fashion of street-singers at Home. There was not a soul in sight, and he was out of all possible earshot of the houses. And he sang through his nose, turning his head from right to left:

"The Son of Man goes forth to war,
A golden crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streams afar—
Who follows in his train?"

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I waited to hear no more, but put the poor wretch into my carriage and drove him off to the nearest missionary for eventual transfer to the Asylum. He repeated the hymn twice while he was with me whom he did not in the least recognise, and I left him singing to the missionary.

Two days later I inquired after his welfare of the Superintendent of the Asylum.

"He was admitted suffering from sunstroke. He died early yesterday morning," said the Superintendent. "Is it true that he was half an hour bareheaded in the sun at midday?"

"Yes," said I, "but do you happen to know if he had anything upon him by any chance when he died?"

"Not to my knowledge," said the Superintendent.

And there the matter rests.

"

THE PIECE OF STRING

BY

HENRI RENÉ ALBERT GUY DE MAUPASSANT

ON all the roads leading to Goderville, the peasants and their wives were coming to town for market-day. The men shambled along at an easy-going gait, with bodies bent forward. Their long legs were deformed and twisted through hard work—from the weight of the plough, which at the same time throws the left shoulder too high, and ruins the figure; from mowing the grain, which effort causes the knees to spread too far apart; and from all the other slow and painful labours of country life. Their blue blouses, starched to a sheenlike varnish and finished at collar and wristbands with little designs in white stitching, stood from their bony bodies like balloons ready for flight, with a head, two arms, and two feet protruding.

Some of the men had a cow or calf in tow at the end of a rope, while their wives followed close behind the animal, switching it over the haunches with a leafy branch to hasten its pace.

The women carried large baskets, out of which stuck the heads of chickens and ducks. They took much shorter and quicker steps than the men. Their lanky, spare figures were decorated

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with mean little shawls pinned across their flat breasts. Each head bore a white linen cover, bound close to the hair and surmounted by a cap.

Now and then, there went by a waggonette drawn by a pony on a jerky trot, which jostled the two men on the seat in a ludicrous manner, and made the woman at the end of the cart hold the sides firmly for ease from the rough jolting.

In the Goderville market-place was a great crowd of men and animals. The horns of the cattle, the high, long-napped hats of the well-to-do peasants, and the head-dresses of women bobbed above the level of that crowd. Noisy voices, sharp and shrill, kept up a wild and ceaseless clamour, only outdone now and then by a great guffaw of laughter from the strong lungs of a jolly bumpkin, or a prolonged *moo* from a cow tied to the wall of some house.

Everywhere it smelled of stables, of milk and manure, of hay and sweat. The air was redolent with that sourish, disagreeable odour savouring of man and beast which is peculiar to the labourers of the fields.

Master Hauchecorne, of Bréauté, had just arrived at Goderville, and was directing his steps to the square when he observed on the ground a little bit of string. Economical, like all true Normans, Master Hauchecorne considered that anything useful was worth picking up, and he bent down painfully, for he suffered from rheumatism. He picked up the scrap of twine from

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the ground, and was preparing to wind it up carefully when he noticed Master Malandain, the harness-maker, looking at him from his doorway. Once they had a quarrel over a halter and had kept angry ever since, both of them holding spite. Master Hauchecorne was smitten with a certain sense of shame at being seen thus by his enemy searching in the dirt for a mere bit of string. He hastily hid his find under his blouse, then in the pocket of his breeches—after which he pretended to be still looking at his feet for something which he had not yet found. At length, he started toward the market-place, his body almost bent double by his chronic pains.

He lost himself at once in the slow, clamorous throng, which was agitated by perpetual bickerings. The prospective buyers, after looking the cows over, would go away only to return perplexed; always fearing to be taken in; never reaching a decision, but narrowly watching the seller's eyes, seeking in the end to detect the deceit of the man and the defect in his animal.

The women, having put their big baskets at their feet, had pulled out the poultry, which lay on the ground with legs tied, with frightened eyes and scarlet combs.

They listened to offers, maintaining their prices with a sharp air and impassive face, or else at a sweep accepting a reduced price, crying after the customer who left reluctantly, "It's settled, Anthime; I'll let you have them!"

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Then, by degrees, the square emptied, and, as the Angelus struck noon, those living at a distance flocked to the inns.

At Jourdain's, the dining-room was filled with guests, as full as the great courtyard was with vehicles of every description—carts, gigs, waggonettes, tilburies, nondescript jaunting-cars, yellow with mud, misshapen, patched up, lifting their shafts to heaven like two arms, or else in a sorry plight with nose in the mud and back in the air.

Right opposite to where the diners were at table, the immense fireplace, all brightly aflame, imparted a genial warmth to the backs of the people ranged on the right. Three spits were turning, loaded with chickens, with pigeons, and with legs of mutton; and a delicious odour of roast meat and of gravy gushing over roast brown skin took wing from the hearth, kindled good humour, and made mouths water.

All the aristocracy of the plough were eating there at Jourdain's, the innkeeper who dealt in horses—a shrewd fellow, who had a goodish penny put by.

The dishes were passed and emptied, as were likewise huge jugs of yellow cider. Every one recounted his dealings—his buying and selling. They gave news of the crops. The weather was good for greens, but somewhat wet for wheat.

All at once, a drum rolled in the court before the house. Almost everybody, save the too

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indifferent, immediately sprang to their feet and ran to the door, or to the windows, with mouth still full and napkin in hand.

After the public crier had stopped his racket, he launched forth in a jerky voice, making his pauses at the wrong time:

"Be it known to the inhabitants of Goderville, and in general to all persons present at the market, that there was lost this morning on the Beuzeville road, between nine and ten o'clock, a black leather pocket-book containing five hundred francs and business papers. You are requested to return it to the mayor's office, at once, or to Master Fortuné Houlbrèque, of Manneville. There will be twenty francs reward."

Then the man went away. They heard once more from afar the dull drum-beats and the fading voice of the crier.

After that, they began to discuss this event, counting the chances Master Houlbrèque yet had of recovering or not recovering his pocket-book.

And the meal went on.

They were finishing their coffee when the corporal of police appeared on the threshold.

He asked:

"Master Hauchecorne, of Bréauté—is he here?"

Hauchecorne, seated at the other end of the table, answered:

"Here I am."

And the corporal resumed:

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"Master Hauchecorne, will you have the kindness to come with me to the mayor's office? The mayor would like to speak to you."

The peasant, surprised and disturbed, tossed off his drink and arose, worse bent than in the morning, because the first steps after a rest were always especially difficult. He started off, repeating:

"Here I am; here I am."

And he followed the corporal.

The mayor was awaiting him, seated in his official chair. He was the notary of the place, a large, grave man of pompous speech.

"Master Hauchecorne," he said, "you were seen this morning, on the Beuzeville road, to pick up the pocket-book lost by Master Houbrèque, of Manneville."

The countryman, confused, stared at the mayor, already frightened by this suspicion attaching to him—why he could not understand.

"I—I—I picked up that pocket-book?"

"Yes, you."

"On my word of honour, I didn't even know nothing about it."

"You were seen."

"They saw me—me? Who's they what saw me?"

"Master Malandain, the harness-maker."

Then the old man remembered, understood, and reddened with anger.

"Ah! he saw me, did he, the rascal? He saw

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me pick up this here string. Look, your worship."

And, rummaging at the bottom of his pocket, he pulled out the little piece of string.

But the incredulous mayor shook his head.

"You will not make me believe, Master Hauchecorne, that Master Malandain, who is a man worthy of all respect, has taken this bit of cord for a pocket-book."

The peasant, furious, raised his hand, and spit at his side to bear witness to his honour, repeating,

"F'r all that, it's God's truth, holy truth, your worship. There! My soul and my salvation knows it's true!"

The mayor resumed:

"After having picked the article up, you even searched also a long while in the mud to make sure if any money had fallen out of it."

The good man choked with rage and terror.

"If them can say—if them can say—such lies as that to take away an honest man's name! If them can say——"

However he might protest, he was not believed.

He was confronted by Master Malandain, who repeated and supported his statement. They railed at each other for an hour. Master Hauchecorne demanded that they search his pockets. Nothing was found upon him.

Finally, the mayor, very much perplexed, let

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him go with the warning that he would inform the public prosecutor, and ask for orders.

The news had spread abroad. When he came out of the mayor's office, the old man was the centre of curiosity and questioning, both serious and jeering, but into which not the least resentment entered. And he began recounting the long rigmarole of the string. They did not believe him. They grinned.

He went along, stopped by every one, or accosting his acquaintances, going over and over his story and his protestations, pointing to his pockets turned inside out to prove he had nothing.

They said to him:

"Come now, you old rascal!"

And he became angry, exasperated, feverish, disconsolate at being doubted, and forever telling his story.

Night fell. It became time to go home. He started out with three of his neighbours, to whom he pointed out the spot where he had picked up the bit of string; and, all along the road, he recited his adventure.

That evening, he made a round of the village of Bréauté so as to tell everyone. He found only unbelievers.

He was ill of it all through the night.

The next day about one in the afternoon, Marius Paumelle, a farm helper of Master Breton, the market-gardener at Ymauville, re-

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turned the pocket-book and its contents to Master Houlbrèque of Manneville.

This man maintained he had found it on the road, but, not knowing how to read, had carried it home, and turned it over to his master.

The news spread to the suburbs. Master Hauchecorne was informed. Immediately, he set himself the task of going about relating his story, capping it with this climax. He was triumphant.

"What hurt me the mostest," he said, "was not the thing itself, don't you see, but the lies. Nothing hurts so as when's lies told about you."

All day long he talked of his adventure. He told it on the roads to the people passing, at the tavern to people who were drinking, and then to the people coming out of church the next Sunday. He even stopped strangers to tell them the tale. He felt relieved by this time, yet something troubled him without his knowing just what it was. People had a mocking manner as they listened. They did not appear convinced. He almost felt their tattle behind his back.

Tuesday of the next week, he went to the Goderville market, solely impelled by the need of recounting his affair.

Malandain, standing in his doorway, began to laugh as he saw him pass. For what?

He accosted a farmer of Criquetot who did not permit him to finish, but, landing him a thump in the pit of the stomach, cried in his

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face, "Get out, you great rogue!" Then he turned on his heel.

Master Hauchecorne, altogether abashed, grew more and more disturbed. Why had he been dubbed "a great rogue"?

When seated at table in Jourdain's tavern, he again began to explain the particulars.

A Montvilliers horse-dealer yelled at him:

"Don't tell me, you old fox! I know your piece of string yarn!"

Hauchecorne stammered, "B—b—but it's found, the pocket-book!"

To which the other retorted:

"That'll do, daddy! There's one who finds, and another who gives up. Neither is no one the wiser."

The peasant was choked off. At last, he understood. They accused him of having had the pocket-book returned by a crony—by an accomplice.

He tried to protest. The whole table started to laugh.

He could not finish his meal, and took his leave amidst their mocking and derision.

He returned to his home, ashamed and indignant, stifled with rage, with confusion; all the more dejected because, with his Norman cunning, he was capable of having done what they accused him of, and even of bragging of it as a good trick. His innocence vaguely appeared to him as impossible to prove; his roguery was too well known. And he felt

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struck to the heart by the injustice of the suspicion.

Again he commenced to tell of his adventure; every day its recital lengthened, each time containing new proofs, more energetic protestations, and more solemn oaths which he prepared in his solitary hours. His mind was altogether occupied by the story of the piece of string. He was believed all the less as his defence grew more complicated and his arguments more artful.

"Now, those are the proofs of a liar," they said behind his back.

He felt this. It consumed his strength. He exhausted himself in useless efforts.

He went into a visible decline.

The jokers now made him detail the story of "The Piece of String" to amuse them, just as you persuade a soldier who has come through a campaign to tell his version of a battle. At last, his mind began to give way.

Near the end of December he took to his bed.

He died the first week in January, and, in the delirium of the throes of death, he protested his innocence, repeating, "A little piece of string—little piece of string—see, here it is, your worship."

THE SPECTRE BRIDEGROOM

BY

WASHINGTON IRVING

ON the summit of one of the heights of the Odenwald, a wild and romantic tract of upper Germany that lies not far from the confluence of the Main and the Rhine, there stood many, many years since the castle of the Baron von Landshort. It is now quite fallen to decay, and almost buried among beech trees and dark firs; above which, however, its old watch-tower may still be seen struggling, like the feudal possessor I have mentioned, to carry a high head and look down upon the neighbouring country.

The baron was a dry branch of the great family of Katzenellenbogen, and inherited the relics of the property and all the pride of his ancestors. Though the warlike disposition of his predecessors had much impaired the family possessions, yet the baron still endeavoured to keep up some show of former state. The times were peaceable, and the German nobles in general had abandoned their inconvenient old castles, perched like eagles' nests among the mountains, and had built more convenient residences in the valleys; still, the baron remained proudly drawn up in his little fortress, cherishing with hereditary

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inveteracy all the old family feuds, so that he was on ill terms with some of his nearest neighbours, on account of disputes that had happened between their great-great-grandfathers.

The baron had but one child, a daughter, but Nature, when she grants but one child, always compensates by making it a prodigy; and so it was with the daughter of the baron. All the nurses, gossips, and country cousins assured her father that she had not her equal for beauty in all Germany; and who should know better than they? She had, moreover, been brought up with great care under the superintendence of two maiden aunts, who had spent some years of their early life at one of the little German courts, and were skilled in all the branches of knowledge necessary to the education of a fine lady. Under their instructions, she became a miracle of accomplishments. By the time she was eighteen, she could embroider to admiration, and had worked whole histories of the saints in tapestry with such strength of expression in their countenances that they looked like so many souls in purgatory. She could read without great difficulty, and had spelled her way through several Church legends and almost all the chivalric wonders of the *Heldenbuch*. She had even made considerable proficiency in writing; could sign her own name without missing a letter, and so legibly that her aunts could read it without spectacles. She excelled in making little elegant, good-for-nothing ladylike nicknacks of all kinds, was versed in the

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most abstruse dancing of the day, played a number of airs on the harp and guitar, and knew all the tender ballads of the *Minnelieder* by heart.

Her aunts, too, having been great flirts and coquettes in their younger days, were admirably calculated to be vigilant guardians and strict censors of the conduct of their niece; for there is no duenna so rigidly prudent and inexorably decorous as a superannuated coquette. She was rarely suffered out of their sight; never went beyond the domains of the castle unless well attended, or, rather, well watched; had continual lectures read to her about strict decorum and implicit obedience; and, as to the men—pah!—she was taught to hold them at such a distance and in such absolute distrust that, unless properly authorised, she would not have cast a glance upon the handsomest cavalier in the world—no, not if he were even dying at her feet.

The good effects of this system were wonderfully apparent. The young lady was a pattern of docility and correctness. While others were wasting their sweetness in the glare of the world, and liable to be plucked and thrown aside by every hand, she was coyly blooming into fresh and lovely womanhood under the protection of those immaculate spinsters, like a rosebud blushing forth among guardian thorns. Her aunts looked upon her with pride and exultation, and vaunted that, though all the other young ladies in the world might go astray, yet, thank Heaven,

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nothing of the kind could happen to the heiress of Katzenellenbogen.

But, however scantily the Baron von Landshort might be provided with children, his household was by no means a small one; for Providence had enriched him with abundance of poor relations. They, one and all, possessed the affectionate disposition common to humble relatives—were wonderfully attached to the baron, and took every possible occasion to come in swarms and enliven the castle. All family festivals were commemorated by these good people at the baron's expense; and, when they were filled with good cheer, they would declare that there was nothing on earth so delightful as these family meetings, these jubilees of the heart.

The baron, though a small man, had a large soul, and it swelled with satisfaction at the consciousness of being the greatest man in the little world about him. He loved to tell long stories about the stark old warriors whose portraits looked grimly down from the walls around, and he found no listeners equal to those who fed at his expense. He was much given to the marvellous, and a firm believer in all those supernatural tales with which every mountain and valley in Germany abounds. The faith of his guests exceeded even his own: they listened to every tale of wonder with open eyes and mouth, and never failed to be astonished, even though repeated for the hundredth time. Thus lived the Baron von Landshort, the oracle of his table, the absolute

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monarch of his little territory, and happy, above all things, in the persuasion that he was the wisest man of the age.

At the time of which my story treats, there was a great family gathering at the castle on an affair of the utmost importance: it was to receive the destined bridegroom of the baron's daughter. A negotiation had been carried on between the father and an old nobleman of Bavaria to unite the dignity of their houses by the marriage of their children. The preliminaries had been conducted with proper punctilio. The young people were betrothed without seeing each other, and the time was appointed for the marriage ceremony. The young Count von Altenburg had been recalled from the army for the purpose, and was actually on his way to the baron's to receive his bride. Missives had even been received from Würzburg, where he was accidentally detained, mentioning the day and hour when he might be expected to arrive.

The castle was in a tumult of preparation to give him a suitable welcome. The fair bride had been decked out with uncommon care. The two aunts had superintended her toilet, and quarrelled the whole morning about every article of her dress. The young lady had taken advantage of their contest to follow the bent of her own taste; and, fortunately, it was a good one. She looked as lovely as youthful bridegroom could desire, and the flutter of expectation heightened the lustre of her charms.

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The suffusions that mantled her face and neck, the gentle heaving of the bosom, the eye now and then lost in reverie, all betrayed the soft tumult that was going on in her little heart. The aunts were continually hovering around her, for maiden aunts are apt to take great interest in affairs of this nature. They were giving her a world of staid counsel how to deport herself, what to say, and in what manner to receive the expected lover.

The baron was no less busied in preparations. He had, in truth, nothing exactly to do; but he was naturally a fuming, bustling little man, and could not remain passive when all the world was in a hurry. He worried from top to bottom of the castle with an air of infinite anxiety; he continually called the servants from their work to exhort them to be diligent; and buzzed about every hall and chamber, as idly restless and importunate as a blue-bottle fly on a warm summer's day.

In the meantime, the fatted calf had been killed; the forests had rung with the clamour of the huntsmen; the kitchen was crowded with good cheer; the cellars had yielded up whole oceans of *Rheinwein* and *Ferneuwein*; and even the great Heidelberg tun had been laid under contribution. Everything was ready to receive the distinguished guest with *Saus und Braus* in the true spirit of German hospitality; but the guest delayed to make his appearance. Hour rolled after hour. The sun, that had poured his downward rays upon the rich forest of the Oden-

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wald, now just gleamed along the summits of the mountains. The baron mounted the highest tower, and strained his eyes in hopes of catching a distant sight of the count and his attendants. Once he thought he beheld them; the sound of horns came floating from the valley, prolonged by the mountain echoes. A number of horsemen were seen far below slowly advancing along the road; but, when they had nearly reached the foot of the mountain, they suddenly struck off in a different direction. The last ray of sunshine departed, the bats began to flit by in the twilight, the road grew dimmer and dimmer to the view, and nothing appeared stirring in it but now and then a peasant lagging homeward from his labour.

While the old castle of Landshort was in this state of perplexity a very interesting scene was transacting in a different part of the Odenwald.

The young Count von Altenburg was tranquilly pursuing his route in that sober, jog-trot way in which a man travels toward matrimony when his friends have taken all the trouble and uncertainty of courtship off his hands, and a bride is waiting as certainly as a dinner at the end of his journey. He had encountered at Würzburg a youthful companion-in-arms with whom he had seen some service on the frontiers—Hermann von Starkenfaust, one of the stoutest hands and worthiest hearts of German chivalry—who was now returning from the army. His father's castle was not far distant from the old fortress of Landshort, although a hereditary feud rendered

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the families hostile and strangers to each other.

In the warm-hearted moment of recognition, the young friends related all their past adventures and fortunes, and the count gave the whole history of his intended nuptials with a young lady whom he had never seen, but of whose charms he had received the most enrapturing descriptions.

As the route of the friends lay in the same direction, they agreed to perform the rest of their journey together, and, that they might do it the more leisurely, set off from Würzburg at an early hour, the count having given directions for his retinue to follow and overtake him.

They beguiled their wayfaring with recollections of their military scenes and adventures; but the count was apt to be a little tedious now and then about the reputed charms of his bride and the felicity that awaited him.

In this way they had entered among the mountains of the Odenwald, and were traversing one of its most lonely and thickly wooded passes. It is well known that the forests of Germany have always been as much infested by robbers as its castles by spectres; and at this time the former were particularly numerous, from the hordes of disbanded soldiers wandering about the country. It will not appear extraordinary, therefore, that the cavaliers were attacked by a gang of these stragglers in the midst of the forest. They defended themselves with bravery, but were nearly

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overpowered when the count's retinue arrived to their assistance. At sight of them, the robbers fled, but not until the count had received a mortal wound. He was slowly and carefully conveyed back to the city of Würzburg, and a friar summoned from a neighbouring convent who was famous for his skill in administering to both soul and body; but half of his skill was superfluous: the moments of the unfortunate count were numbered.

With his dying breath, he entreated his friend to repair instantly to the castle of Landshort and explain the fatal cause of his not keeping his appointment with his bride. Though not the most ardent of lovers, he was one of the most punctilious of men, and appeared earnestly solicitous that his mission should be speedily and courteously executed. "Unless this is done," said he, "I shall not sleep quietly in my grave." He repeated these last words with peculiar solemnity. A request at a moment so impressive admitted no hesitation. Starkenfaust endeavoured to soothe him to calmness, promised faithfully to execute his wish, and gave him his hand in solemn pledge. The dying man pressed it in acknowledgment, but soon lapsed into delirium—raved about his bride, his engagements, his plighted word—ordered his horse, that he might ride to the castle of Landshort, and expired in the fancied act of vaulting into the saddle.

Starkenfaust bestowed a sigh and a soldier's

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tear on the untimely fate of his comrade, and then pondered on the awkward mission he had undertaken. His heart was heavy, and his head perplexed; for he was to present himself an unbidden guest among hostile people, and to damp their festivity with tidings fatal to their hopes. Still, there were certain whisperings of curiosity in his bosom to see this far-famed beauty of Katzenellenbogen, so cautiously shut up from the world; for he was a passionate admirer of the sex, and there was a dash of eccentricity and enterprise in his character that made him fond of all singular adventure.

Previous to his departure, he made all due arrangements with the holy fraternity of the convent for the funeral solemnities of his friend, who was to be buried in the cathedral of Würzburg near some of his illustrious relatives, and the mourning retinue of the count took charge of his remains.

It is now high time that we should return to the ancient family of Katzenellenbogen, who were impatient for their guest, and still more for their dinner, and to the worthy little baron, whom we left airing himself on the watch-tower.

Night closed in, but still no guest arrived. The baron descended from the tower in despair. The banquet, which had been delayed from hour to hour, could no longer be postponed. The meats were already overdone, the cook in an agony, and the whole household had the look of a garrison that had been reduced by famine. The

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baron was obliged reluctantly to give orders for the feast without the presence of the guest. All were seated at table, and just on the point of commencing, when the sound of a horn from without the gate gave notice of the approach of a stranger. Another long blast filled the old courts of the castle with its echoes, and was answered by the warder from the walls. The baron hastened to receive his future son-in-law.

The drawbridge had been let down, and the stranger was before the gate. He was a tall, gallant cavalier, mounted on a black steed. His countenance was pale, but he had a beaming, romantic eye and an air of stately melancholy. The baron was a little mortified that he should have come in this simple, solitary style. His dignity for a moment was ruffled, and he felt disposed to consider it a want of proper respect for the important occasion and the important family with which he was to be connected. He pacified himself, however, with the conclusion that it must have been youthful impatience which had induced him thus to spur on sooner than his attendants.

"I am sorry," said the stranger, "to break in upon you thus unseasonably——"

Here the baron interrupted him with a world of compliments and greetings, for, to tell the truth, he prided himself upon his courtesy and eloquence. The stranger attempted once or twice to stem the torrent of words, but in vain; so he bowed his head, and suffered it to flow on

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By the time the baron had come to a pause, they had reached the inner court of the castle, and the stranger was again about to speak, when he was once more interrupted by the appearance of the female part of the family leading forth the shrinking and blushing bride. He gazed on her for a moment as one entranced; it seemed as if his whole soul beamed forth in the gaze, and rested upon that lovely form. One of the maiden aunts whispered something in her ear; she made an effort to speak; her moist blue eye was timidly raised, gave a shy glance of inquiry on the stranger, and was cast again to the ground. The words died away, but there was a sweet smile playing about her lips, and a soft dimpling of the cheek that showed her glance had not been unsatisfactory. It was impossible for a girl of the fond age of eighteen, highly predisposed for love and matrimony, not to be pleased with so gallant a cavalier.

The late hour at which the guest had arrived left no time for parley. The baron was peremptory, and deferred all particular conversation until the morning, and led the way to the untasted banquet.

It was served up in the great hall of the castle. Around the walls hung the hard-favoured portraits of the heroes of the house of Katzenellenbogen, and the trophies which they had gained in the field and in the chase. Hacked corslets, splintered jousting-spears, and tattered banners were mingled with the spoils of sylvan warfare;

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the jaws of the wolf and the tusks of the boar grinned horribly among cross-bows and battle-axes, and a huge pair of antlers branched immediately over the head of the youthful bridegroom.

The cavalier took but little notice of the company or the entertainment.' He scarcely tasted the banquet, but seemed absorbed in admiration of his bride. He conversed in a low tone that could not be overheard, for the language of love is never loud; but where is the female ear so dull that it cannot catch the softest whisper of the lover? There was a mingled tenderness and gravity in his manner that appeared to have a powerful effect upon the young lady. Her colour came and went as she listened with deep attention. Now and then she made some blushing reply, and, when his eye was turned away, she would steal a sidelong glance at his romantic countenance, and heave a gentle sigh of tender happiness. It was evident that the young couple were completely enamoured. The aunts, who were deeply versed in the mysteries of the heart, declared that they had fallen in love with each other at first sight.

The feast went on merrily, or at least noisily, for the guests were all blessed with those keen appetites that attend upon light purses and mountain air. The baron told his best and longest stories, and never had he told them so well or with such great effect. If there was anything marvellous, his auditors were lost in astonishment; and if anything facetious, they were

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sure to laugh exactly in the right place. The baron, it is true, like most great men, was too dignified to utter any joke but a dull one; it was always enforced, however, by a bumper of excellent *Hochheimer*, and even a dull joke at one's own table, served up with jolly old wine, is irresistible. Many good things were said by poorer and keener wits that would not bear repeating, except on similar occasions; many sly speeches whispered in ladies' ears that almost convulsed them with suppressed laughter; and a song or two roared out by a poor but merry and broad-faced cousin of the baron that absolutely made the maiden aunts hold up their fans.

Amidst all this revelry, the stranger guest maintained a most singular and unseasonable gravity. His countenance assumed a deeper cast of dejection as the evening advanced, and, strange as it may appear, even the baron's jokes seemed only to render him the more melancholy. At times he was lost in thought, and at times there was a perturbed and restless wandering of the eye that bespoke a mind but ill at ease. His conversations with the bride became more and more earnest and mysterious. Lowering clouds began to steal over the fair serenity of her brow, and tremors to run through her tender frame.

All this could not escape the notice of the company. Their gayety was chilled by the unaccountable gloom of the bridegroom; their spirits were infected; whispers and glances were interchanged, accompanied by shrugs and dubious

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shakes of the head. The song and the laugh grew less and less frequent; there were dreary pauses in the conversation, which were at length succeeded by wild tales and supernatural legends. One dismal story produced another still more dismal, and the baron nearly frightened some of the ladies into hysterics with the history of the goblin horseman that carried away the fair Leonora—a dreadful story which has since been put into excellent verse, and is read and believed by all the world.

The bridegroom listened to this tale with profound attention. He kept his eyes steadily fixed on the baron, and, as the story drew to a close, began gradually to rise from his seat, growing taller and taller, until, in the baron's entranced eye, he seemed almost to tower into a giant. The moment the tale was finished, he heaved a deep sigh, and took a solemn farewell of the company. They were all amazement. The baron was perfectly thunderstruck.

"What! going to leave the castle at midnight? Why, everything was prepared for his reception; a chamber was ready for him if he wished to retire."

The stranger shook his head mournfully and mysteriously: "I must lay my head in a different chamber to-night."

There was something in this reply and the tone in which it was uttered that made the baron's heart misgive him; but he rallied his forces, and repeated his hospitable entreaties.

The Spectre Bridegroom

The stranger shook his head silently, but positively, at every offer, and, waving his farewell to the company, stalked slowly out of the hall. The maiden aunts were absolutely petrified; the bride hung her head, and a tear stole to her eye.

The baron followed the stranger to the great court of the castle, where the black charger stood pawing the earth and snorting with impatience. When they had reached the portal, whose deep archway was dimly lighted by a cresset, the stranger paused, and addressed the baron in a hollow tone of voice, which the vaulted roof rendered still more sepulchral.

"Now that we are alone," said he, "I will impart to you the reason of my going. I have a solemn, an indispensable engagement——"

"Why," said the baron, "cannot you send some one in your place?"

"It admits of no substitute—I must attend it in person; I must away to Würzburg cathedral——"

"Ay," said the baron, plucking up spirit, "but not until to-morrow—to-morrow you shall take your bride there."

"No! no!" replied the stranger, with tenfold solemnity, "my engagement is with no bride—the worms! the worms expect me! I am a dead man—I have been slain by robbers—my body lies at Würzburg—at midnight I am to be buried—the grave is waiting for me—I must keep my appointment!"

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He sprang on his black charger, dashed over the drawbridge, and the clattering of his horse's hoofs was lost in the whistling of the night-blast.

The baron returned to the hall in the utmost consternation, and related what had passed. Two ladies fainted outright ; others sickened at the idea of having banqueted with a spectre. It was the opinion of some that this might be the Wild Huntsman, famous in German legend. Some talked of mountain-sprites, of wood-demons, and of other supernatural beings with which the good people of Germany have been so grievously harassed since time immemorial. One of the poor relations ventured to suggest that it might be some sportive evasion of the young cavalier, and that the very gloominess of the caprice seemed to accord with so melancholy a personage. This, however, drew on him the indignation of the whole company, and especially of the baron, who looked upon him as little better than an infidel ; so that he was fain to abjure his heresy as speedily as possible, and come into the faith of the true believers.

But, whatever may have been the doubts entertained, they were completely put to an end by the arrival next day of regular missives confirming the intelligence of the young count's murder and his interment in Würzburg cathedral.

The dismay at the castle may well be imagined. The baron shut himself up in his chamber. The guests, who had come to rejoice with him, could

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not think of abandoning him in his distress. They wandered about the courts or collected in groups in the hall, shaking their heads and shrugging their shoulders at the troubles of so good a man, and sat longer than ever at the table, and ate and drank more stoutly than ever, by way of keeping up their spirits. But the situation of the widowed bride was the most pitiable. To have lost a husband before she had even embraced him—and such a husband! If the very spectre could be so gracious and noble, what must have been the living man? She filled the house with lamentations.

On the night of the second day of her widowhood, she had retired to her chamber, accompanied by one of her aunts, who insisted on sleeping with her. The aunt, who was one of the best tellers of ghost-stories in all Germany, had just been recounting one of her longest, and had fallen asleep in the very midst of it. The chamber was remote, and overlooked a small garden. The niece lay pensively gazing at the beams of the rising moon as they trembled on the leaves of an aspen tree before the lattice. The castle clock had just tolled midnight, when a soft strain of music stole up from the garden. She rose hastily from her bed and stepped lightly to the window. A tall figure stood among the shadows of the trees. As it raised its head, a beam of moonlight fell upon the countenance. Heaven and earth! she beheld the Spectre Bridegroom! A loud shriek at that moment burst

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upon her ear, and her aunt, who had been awakened by the music, and had followed her silently to the window, fell into her arms. When she looked again, the spectre had disappeared.

Of the two females, the aunt now required the most soothing, for she was perfectly beside herself with terror. As to the young lady, there was something even in the spectre of her lover that seemed endearing. There was still the semblance of manly beauty, and, though the shadow of a man is but little calculated to satisfy the affections of a lovesick girl, yet, where the substance is not to be had, even that is consoling. The aunt declared she would never sleep in that chamber again; the niece, for once, was refractory, and declared as strongly that she would sleep in no other in the castle; the consequence was that she had to sleep in it alone; but she drew a promise from her aunt not to relate the story of the spectre, lest she should be denied the only melancholy pleasure left her on earth—that of inhabiting the chamber over which the guardian shade of her lover kept its nightly vigils.

How long the good old lady would have observed this promise is uncertain, for she dearly loved to talk of the marvellous, and there is a triumph in being the first to tell a frightful story; it is, however, still quoted in the neighbourhood as a memorable instance of female secrecy that she kept it to herself for a whole week, when she was suddenly absolved from all further restraint by intelligence brought to the breakfast-table one

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morning that the young lady was not to be found. Her room was empty—the bed had not been slept in—the window was open, and the bird had flown!

The astonishment and concern with which the intelligence was received can be imagined only by those who have witnessed the agitation which the mishaps of a great man cause among his friends. Even the poor relations paused for a moment from the indefatigable labours of the trencher, when the aunt, who had at first been struck speechless, wrung her hands and shrieked out, "The goblin! the goblin! she's carried away by the goblin!"

In a few words, she related the fearful scene of the garden, and concluded that the spectre must have carried off his bride. Two of the domestics corroborated the opinion, for they had heard the clattering of a horse's hoofs down the mountain about midnight, and had no doubt that it was the spectre on his black charger bearing her away to the tomb. All present were struck with the direful probability, for events of the kind are extremely common in Germany, as many well-authenticated histories bear witness.

What a lamentable situation was that of the poor baron! What a heartrending dilemma for a fond father and a member of the great family of Katzenellenbogen! His only daughter had either been rapt away to the grave, or he was to have some wood-demon for a son-in-law, and perchance a troop of goblin grandchildren. As usual, he was completely bewildered, and all the

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castle in an uproar. The men were ordered to take horse, and scour every road and path and glen of the Odenwald. The baron himself had just drawn on his jack-boots, girded on his sword, and was about to mount his steed to sally forth on the doubtful quest, when he was brought to a pause by a new apparition. A lady was seen approaching the castle mounted on a palfrey, attended by a cavalier on horseback. She galloped up to the gate, sprang from her horse, and, falling at the baron's feet, embraced his knees. It was his lost daughter, and her companion—the Spectre Bridegroom! The baron was astounded. He looked at his daughter, then at the spectre, and almost doubted the evidence of his senses. The latter, too, was wonderfully improved in his appearance since his visit to the world of spirits. His dress was splendid, and set off a noble figure of manly symmetry. He was no longer pale and melancholy. His fine countenance was flushed with the glow of youth, and joy rioted in his large dark eye.

The mystery was soon cleared up. The cavalier (for, in truth, as you must have known all the while, he was no goblin) announced himself as Sir Hermann von Starkenfaust. He related his adventure with the young count. He told how he had hastened to the castle to deliver the unwelcome tidings, but that the eloquence of the baron had interrupted him in every attempt to tell his tale; how the sight of the bride had completely captivated him; and that,

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to pass a few hours near her, he had tacitly suffered the mistake to continue. How he had been sorely perplexed in what way to make a decent retreat, until the baron's goblin stories had suggested his eccentric exit. How, fearing the feudal hostility of the family, he had repeated his visits by stealth—had haunted the garden beneath the young lady's window—had wooed—had won—had borne away in triumph—and, in a word, had wedded the fair.

Under any other circumstances, the baron would have been inflexible, for he was tenacious of paternal authority and devoutly obstinate in all family feuds; but he loved his daughter; he had lamented her as lost; he rejoiced to find her still alive; and, though her husband was of a hostile house, yet, thank Heaven! he was not a goblin. There was something, it must be acknowledged, that did not exactly accord with his notions of strict veracity in the joke the knight had passed upon him of his being a dead man; but several old friends present, who had served in the wars, assured him that every stratagem was excusable in love, and that the cavalier was entitled to especial privilege, having lately served as a trooper.

Matters, therefore, were happily arranged. The baron pardoned the young couple on the spot. The revels at the castle were resumed. The poor relations overwhelmed this new member of the family with loving kindness; he was so gallant, so generous—and so rich. The aunts.

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it is true, were somewhat scandalised that their system of strict seclusion and passive obedience should be so badly exemplified, but attributed it all to their negligence in not having the windows grated. One of them was particularly mortified at having her marvellous story marred, and that the only spectre she had ever seen should turn out a counterfeit; but the niece seemed perfectly happy at having found him substantial flesh and blood. And so the story ends.

A FIGHT FOR THE TSARINA

BY

MAURUS JOKAI

IN the reign of the Tsar Peter III., there existed at St. Petersburg a secret society which was known as "The Nameless." Its members were accustomed to meet at the house of a Russian nobleman, Yelagin by name, who alone knew the identity of his visitors, most of whom were strangers to each other. Distinguished personages of every walk of life, including priests, court ladies, officers of the Guard, Cossacks, young business men, musicians, street-singers, actors and actresses, scientists, clergymen, and statesmen, used to gather there. The only qualifications needed for entrance into the Society, the members of which were chosen by Yelagin, were beauty and wit. The only forms of address used were "thee" and "thou," and by Christian name, such as Anne, Alexandra, Katherine, Olga, Peter, Alexis, and Ivan. Their purpose in thus assembling was solely to amuse themselves at their ease. All met here on equal terms; even those who, under the conventions of caste and rank, occupied the relative positions of master and slave, broke the chains of prejudice for the moment. It is not

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unlikely that he with whom the grenadier private is now playing chess is a general who might order him a hundred lashes to-morrow should he take a false step on parade! Yet now he strives with him to make a queen out of a pawn. It is possible, too, that the pretty woman who is singing sprightly French songs to the accompaniment of an instrument which she plays with her left hand is a lady in the court of the Tsarina, who probably is much more accustomed to throwing coins from her carriage to street players! Perhaps she is a princess, possibly the wife of the Lord Chamberlain, or perhaps of even higher rank than this?

Russian society of every class, high and low, met in Yelagin's castle, and there enjoyed fraternity in the broadest sense of the word. Curious phenomenon, that this should happen in Russia of all countries, where so much is thought of aristocracy, officialdom, and pomp; where an inferior must dismount from his horse when meeting a superior, where non-commissioned officers take off their coats in token of salute when they meet those of higher rank, and where generals kiss priests' hands, and the noblest in the land fall on their faces before the Tsar! Here they laugh, and dance, and are familiar together, ridicule the Government, and gossip about the high dignitaries of the church—all without fear or the stiffness of society. Was merely love of amusement and novelty at the bottom of this? The existence of the secret

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society was frequently made known to the police, who certainly could not be reproached for not having attempted to quash it; but, when proceedings were begun, they usually came to nothing. The investigating official either never discovered anything suspicious, or, if he did, the case was postponed. Those who were arrested in connection with the matter were set at liberty, all papers concerning the case were either destroyed or disappeared, and countless reams of writing were converted into plain white paper. If some influential official saw fit to conduct the prosecution of "The Nameless" energetically, he usually soon found himself journeying to some foreign country on an important mission, from which he was unlikely to return for a considerable period. "The Nameless Society" was evidently under the protection of powerful influences.

At the close of one of these entertainments, a young Cossack officer remained behind the other guests, and, when quite alone with his host, he said to him,

"Yelagin, did you see the pretty woman with whom I danced the mazurka to-night?"

"Yes, I saw her. Have you fallen in love with her, as the others have done?"

"I must make that woman my wife."

Yelagin clapped the Cossack on the shoulders and looked into his eyes.

"That you will not do! That woman will never be your wife, friend Yemelyan."

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Yelagin clapped the Cossack on the shoulders.

"I will marry her—I have determined to do so."

"You will not marry her, for she will not accept you."

"If she does not come with me, I shall carry her off by force."

"You cannot marry her, because she has a husband."

"Then I shall carry off her husband with her."

"You cannot carry her off, for she lives in a palace, guarded by many soldiers, and, when she drives, her carriage is accompanied by many outriders."

"I shall take her away with her palace, her soldiers, and her carriage. By St. Gregory, I swear it!"

Yelagin laughed scornfully.

"My good Yemelyan, go home and sleep it off. That pretty woman is the Tsarina!"

The Cossack turned pale, and his breath came in gasps; but, the next moment, his eyes flashed, and he said to Yelagin:

"Nevertheless, what I have said, I have said."

Yelagin ceremoniously bowed out his guest. But, unlikely as it may appear, Yemelyan was not intoxicated, unless, indeed, it were with the wine of a woman's eyes.

Several years passed. The society of "The Nameless" was broken up and scattered. The Tsar had been assassinated, and Katherine, his

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wife, had ascended the throne. Some people alleged that she had brought about his death; others defended her. It was stated that she had known what was going to happen, but had been unable to prevent it; that she had pretended, after a struggle with her conscience, to know nothing of the poison administered to her husband. Moreover, it was even asserted that she had done well, and that the fate which had overtaken the Tsar was a just one, as he was a wicked man; and, finally, the whole matter was denied, and it was said that Tsar Peter had not been assassinated at all, but had died a natural death from acute inflammation of the stomach. According to the immortal Voltaire, he was too much addicted to brandy. However, the Tsar was buried; but, for the Tsarina Katherine, he belonged to that army of the dead who do not sleep in peace, who rise from their graves, and, stretching out clammy hands from their shrouds, lay gruesome touch on those who have forgotten them. And, when they turn over in their graves, the earth seems to tremble under the feet of those that walk over them!

Among the many diverse rumours that circulated, one difficult to believe, but which was generally credited among the populace, and which caused much loss of life before it faded from memory, was to the effect that Tsar Peter had neither died a natural death nor had been assassinated, but that he still lived. It was said that a common soldier, resembling the Tsar even

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to his pock-marked face, had been shown to the public on the Tsar's death-bed in St. Petersburg, and that the Tsar himself had escaped from prison in the soldier's clothes, and would return to recapture his throne, subdue his wife, and destroy his enemies! Five pretenders rose, one after the other, in all parts of the Russian Empire, the rallying-cry of each being "Revenge on the faithless!" The usurpers conquered sometimes a northern, sometimes a southern province, assembled an army, captured towns, and generally conducted themselves in such a manner that it was necessary to despatch forces to defeat them. No sooner was one of these pretenders driven into the northern deserts, or captured and hanged, than another Tsar Peter would rise up and instigate another rebellion, interrupting the enjoyment of the Court circle until it seemed as if these things would never end. The murdered husband remained unburied, for, at any moment, he might rise up in some part of the country, exclaiming, "I am still alive!" He seemed to have a hundred lives, for, no matter how many times he was killed, he would again appear with the statement that he still lived. After five of these pretenders of Peter had followed the real Tsar to the grave, a sixth made his appearance. The name of this usurper, who was the most daring and the most feared of all, will be inscribed for all time in the history of the Russian people as a horrible example to all who swerve from the paths of

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rectitude. His name was Yemelyan Pugascheff. Born and bred a Cossack in the province of the Don, he took part in the Prussian campaign, first as a soldier of Prussia, later as a follower of the Tsar. At the siege of Bender, he had become a Cossack hetman. On account of his superb physical strength, and his natural shrewdness and adaptability, he soon became a leader among men; but his advancement was cut short by the peace which was proclaimed. He was sent, with many other discharged soldiers, back to the Don province, where there was nothing else to do but to attend to farming matters. Pugascheff, however, had no idea of devoting the rest of his life to the making of cheese, which had been his original occupation. He hated the Tsarina—and adored her. He hated the proud woman who dared to place her yoke upon the Russian people, and he adored the woman sair enough to ensnare the heart of every Russian! He became obsessed with the mad thought that he must fold that woman in his arms, even if he had to wrest her from her throne to do so. To this end, he prepared his plans. He journeyed to the Volga, to the land of the Roskolniks—the descendants of the persecuted fanatics who, in past days, had been executed by hanging, on trees or on scaffolds, for the sole reason that they crossed themselves downwards, and not upwards, as one does in Moscow. The Roskolniks were always ready for an uprising, and required only a leader.

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Pugascheff tried to work his purpose with these, but his plans miscarried, and he fell into the hands of the police, and was thrown into prison at Kazan.

And so he might dream on! He dreamed one night that he freed his limbs from their chains, cut his way through the prison wall, swam across the surrounding trench, which was filled with sharp spikes, and, finally, reached the desert plains of the Ural Sorodok, without food and with his clothing in rags! The Yakics Cossacks, the most dreaded people in Russia, inhabit the plain of Uralsk, one of those border countries of which only the outline is seen on the map. This tribe has no intercourse with the neighbouring peoples, and changes its location from year to year. One winter, a Cossack band will make a raid in the land of the Kirghese, and burn down their huts; next year, the Kirghese will retaliate on the Cossacks! Fighting is good sport in the winter. In the summer, however, one sleeps in the open, and there are no houses to destroy! These Cossacks are Roskolniks by faith. Not long since, they had amused themselves by putting to death the Russian Commissioner-General Traubenberg, together with his followers, who had come to make regulations in regard to the fishing rights in the River Yaik; and, by this act, they considered as demonstrated the fact that the Government had nothing to say about their fish. At the time that Pugascheff arrived there,

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they had just finished dividing the weapons of the Russian soldiers among themselves, and were planning as to what they should next do. One beautiful autumn night, the escaped prisoner, having lost himself in the valley of Yeremina Kuriza, situated in the most lonely part of the Ural Mountains, reached the tumbledown village of Yaicskoi, and knocked at the door of the first house he saw, saying that he was a refugee, and requesting admittance. He was received with open arms, and was given supper. The owner of the house was himself poor, the Kirghese having stolen his sheep. One of his sons, a Roskolnik priest, had been forced to work in the lead mines; another had been taken to serve as a soldier, and had subsequently died; the third had been involved in a rebellion and been hanged. The old man remained at home alone. Pugascheff listened to the lament of his host, and said,

"These things can be alleviated."

"Who can raise my dead sons to life again?" said the old man bitterly.

"He who himself rose in order that he might slay."

"Of whom do you speak?"

"Of the Tsar."

"What! the murdered Tsar!" exclaimed the old soldier, with astonishment.

"He has already been killed six times, yet still he lives. Such people as I met on my journey here all asked me, 'Is it true that the

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Tsar is alive, and that he has escaped his captors?' I answered them that it was true, that he was on his way here, and that, before long, he would show himself to them."

"That is all very well, but how can the Tsar get here?"

"He is already here."

"Where is he?"

"I am he."

"Well, well!" replied Kocsenikoff. "Now I understand what you wish me to do. I shall be ready whenever you say the word. It is all the same to me, so that I have a leader. But who is to believe that you are the Tsar? Hundreds of people have seen him face to face. The face of the Tsar was horribly pockmarked as everyone knows, while yours is smooth."

"We can soon arrange that. Has there not recently been a death from the black-pox in this neighbourhood?"

"We have such a death every day. My last labourer died two days ago."

"Very well; I shall sleep in his bed, and I shall leave it like Tsar Peter."

He kept his word. He lay on the infected couch. Two days later, he was down with the black-pox, and, six weeks afterward, he rose with the pale and afflicted countenance of the unhappy Tsar.

Kocsenikoff felt that a man who could so carelessly set his life at stake was one to be counted on. In this region, nine out of every

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ten men have some hidden plan of personal revenge, for the consummation of which they await only a suitable opportunity. Among the first ten people to whom Kocsenikoff confided the scheme, he found nine who were willing to take part in the daring undertaking, even to the extent of their heads; but the tenth was a traitor. He betrayed the plot to Colonel Simonoff, the commander of the Yaicskoi, who at once put Kocsenikoff under arrest. Pugascheff, however, succeeded in escaping on the very horse which had been sent with the Cossack who was assigned to arrest him—even carrying off the Cossack himself!

For the enlightenment of future generations, the name of the Cossack whom Pugascheff carried off is chronicled in the history of the nation. Czika was the name of this faint-hearted individual. The event took place on September 15th. When, two days later, Pugascheff approached the town of Yaicskoi, he was arrayed in a scarlet, fur-trimmed tunic, and had three hundred bold troopers at his back. As he neared the town, he ordered that trumpets be blown, and demanded that Colonel Simonoff surrender, and kiss the hand of his lord and master, Tsar Peter III. Simonoff opposed him with 5,800 troops, of whom 800 were regular Russian soldiers, and they soon succeeded in surrounding Pugascheff. At a moment when all seemed lost, he extracted a letter from his bosom, and read out to the troops that con-

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fronted him a proclamation in which he besought the Cossacks faithful to Peter III. to assist him to regain his crown and to oust pretenders, threatening with death those who might dispute his authority. This spread consternation among the Cossacks, and the cry was echoed from lip to lip, "The Tsar lives! This is the Tsar!" The officers tried to preserve order, but to no purpose. They began to fight among themselves, and the struggle went on until far into the night. The end of the matter was that, instead of Simonoff's capturing Pugascheff, the latter made prisoners of eleven of his officers; and, when he retired from the scene, his three hundred men had been increased to eight hundred. Only with great difficulty was Colonel Simonoff able to retain command over the remainder of his men. Pugascheff encamped on the outskirts of the town, in the grounds of a Russian nobleman, and on the wide-spreading trees he hung the eleven captured officers. His adversary feared to attack him, but entrenched himself under the shelter of cannon, awaiting attack in his turn. But our bold friend was not quite such a fool as to give him battle. He must first gain more adherents, more guns, and win more important battles. He turned his attention to the small towns that had been built by the Government along the Yaik. The Roskolniks greeted the pseudo-Tsar with wild enthusiasm. They believed that he had risen from his grave to punish the arrogance of the Moscow clergy, and

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that he intended to substitute their own persecuted faith for the Court religion. By the third day, 3,000 men had flocked to his standards. The fortress of Ilecska was his first stopping-place. It is distant about seventy versts from Yaicskoi. The gates were opened for him, and he was received with enthusiasm, the town-guard joining his troops. The arms and ammunition he secured at Ilecska enabled him to extend his campaign. The stronghold of Kazizna, to which he next turned his attention, did not, however, give up so easily, and Pugascheff was forced to lay siege to it. In the heat of battle, Pugascheff's Cossacks called out to those within the town, whereupon the latter immediately turned their guns upon their own officers. All who opposed them were summarily executed, and the Colonel himself was taken prisoner by Pugascheff, who had an aversion to any one who wore his hair long, as was then the fashion among the Russian officers. For this reason, the Colonel was hanged. Then, well furnished with implements of war, Pugascheff marched to the fortress of Nisnaya Osfernaya, which he also captured after a short siege. All those who would not take up his cause, he killed.

Pugascheff now commanded 4,000 men, and was therefore in a position to attack the stronghold of Talitseva, the defenders of which were led by two brave men, Bilof and Yelagin by name. The Russians entrenched themselves well in face of the rebels, and, in all probability,

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would have been victorious if their stores of hay had not been burned up. The light of this fire was of much assistance to the rebels. Bilof and Yelagin were driven out of the gates, and killed. When the pseudo-Tsar entered the town, a wonderfully beautiful woman came to him in the market-place, and fell at his feet, crying for mercy. The woman was very fair, and the grief and excitement under which she was labouring made her still more attractive.

"For whom do you ask pardon?"

"For my husband, who was wounded while fighting against you."

"What is your husband's name?"

"Captain Chaloff, the commander of the fort."

A noble-hearted man would undoubtedly have made both husband and wife happy by the gift of their freedom. A profligate would have killed the husband and taken the wife for himself. Pugascheff hanged them both. He knew perfectly well that there were many still living who remembered that Peter III. was not a lover of women, and he acted his part consistently to the end.

The rebels seemed to move on wings. The taking of Talicseva was followed by the capture of Czernoyecinskaya. The commander of the latter place fled at the approach of the rebel leader, and gave over the defence of the fortress to Captain Nilsayeff, who surrendered out of hand. Pugascheff, who did not approve of officers who deserted to the enemy, hanged him

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without saying "Thank you." The soldiers of the rank and file he spared, but he had their hair clipped, so that if, by any chance, they should escape, he would know them again. Finally, the last fortress in the district, Presistenska, situated not far from the capital, Orenburg, surrendered to the rebels, and in the evening of the same day Pugascheff encamped outside the walls of Orenburg with thirty cannon and a well-disciplined army. These things all happened within a fortnight. In that time, he had captured six forts, cut a whole regiment to pieces, and created one of his own, with which he now attacked the capital of the province.

The Russian Empire is a land of great distances, and Pugascheff might have conquered half of it before anything could be done at St. Petersburg. He was nicknamed "the Marquis" by Katherine, who often in the Court circles laughed heartily about her extraordinary husband, on the way to reconquer his wife, the Tsarina. The gallows was to be his nuptial bed when he arrived.

On the announcement of Pugascheff's approach, Reinsburg, the Governor of Orenburg, despatched a part of his army to attack the rebel. Colonel Biloff was in command, but he fared no better than many other hunters after big game do. His quarry was too much for him, and he never returned to Orenburg; instead, Pugascheff's army appeared before its walls. Reinsburg then sent his most formidable regiment, under the command of Major Naumoff,

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to the attack. The pseudo-Tsar did not oppose it until it neared the mountains outside Orenburg, when, with masked guns, he opened such a destructive fire upon the Russians that they were utterly defeated and forced to retire under cover of the town. Pugascheff then left his position in the mountains, and encamped on the plain before the walls of the fortress. The idea of both armies was to tire each other out by procrastination. Although it was but October, the plains on which Pugascheff had pitched his camp were covered with snow, so that, instead of tents, he had huts made of oak branches. Each army had an ally of nature—the one, frost, and the other, hunger. Hunger eventually proved the stronger. Naumoff marched out of the fort, and made for the mountains which had shortly before been the camping-ground of his opponent. His infantry charged upon the rebel troops, but Pugascheff suddenly changed his tactics, and flung his Cossacks upon the enemy's flank, compelling him to seek safety in flight. Naumoff himself cut his way, at the head of his artillery, sword in hand, through the Cossack lines. Then Pugascheff besieged the town. With his forty-eight guns, he commenced a bombardment which lasted until November 9th, when he attempted to take the town by assault. The attack was repulsed, however, the Russians making a stubborn defence. Pugascheff decided, therefore, to starve his enemy into submission. The

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face of the country shone white with snow, the trees of the forests were silvered with icicles, and, throughout the long nights, the desert was transformed by the cold radiance of the moon into an enchanting background for Pugascheff's dream. For Pugascheff dreamed that one day he should be the spouse of Katherine, the Tsarina of All the Russias.

Katherine II. was an inveterate player of tarok, and was especially fond of that species of the game which afterward took its name from a famous Russian general, "Paskevics." This game required four players. One evening, the quartet was made up of the Tsarina, Princess Dashkoff, Prince Orloff, and General Karr. The last-named was (prospectively) a celebrated soldier, and as a tarok-player he was without a rival. He rose from the table always victorious. No one ever had seen him lose money, and, for that reason, he fell into the good graces of the Tsarina. She was reported to have said that, if she could only once succeed in winning a rouble from Karr, she would wear it on a chain suspended from her neck. It is not unlikely that General Karr's success depended as much upon the errors of his opponents as upon his own skill. The attention of the ladies was divided between the game and Orloff's beautiful eyes, while Orloff's success with the fair sex was so great that he could hardly be expected to have equal luck at cards. At one point of the game, while the cards were

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being shuffled, the remark was made that it was disgraceful that an escaped Cossack like Pugascheff should be able to subdue a fourth part of European Russia, to defeat the flower of the Russian troops times without number, to execute Russian officers like criminals, and, finally, to make terms for the surrender of Orenburg like a prince of the blood.

"I know the fellow very well," said Karr. "While His Majesty was living, I used to play cards with Pugascheff at Oranienbaum. But he was a dull-witted chap. Whenever I called for *carreau*, he would give me *cœur*."

"His play has evidently not improved much since then," said the Tsarina; "for now he throws *pique* after *cœur*."

It was at that time the custom at the Russian court to interlard conversation with French phrases. The French word *cœur* means heart, and *piquer* to prick or annoy.

"No wonder, when our generals are so incompetent. Now, if I were only there!"

"Perhaps you will do us the favour of going?" said Orloff, with a smile.

"I am at Her Majesty's service," replied General Karr.

"But what would become of our tarok parties if you were not here," laughingly put in the Tsarina.

"Well, your Majesty might console yourself with a hunting party now and then at Peterhof."

The suggestion found favour with Katherine,

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for it was at Peterhof that she had become acquainted with Orloff, and she had passed many pleasant hours there. She smilingly nodded to the General.

"Very well, then, but you must be back in a fortnight."

"A fortnight is, indeed, a short time," returned Karr; "but if your Majesty wishes, I shall take sledge within the hour, and on the third day shall be in Bugulminska. On the fourth day, I shall arrange my cards, and, on the fifth, I shall send word to this fellow that I challenge him to a game. On the sixth day, I shall defeat him at every point, and, on the seventh and eighth days, by playing my last trick, I shall take him prisoner, and bring him in chains to your Majesty's feet."

The odd way in which the card-playing general expressed himself was too much for Katherine's gravity, but she instructed Orloff to take the necessary steps to see that Karr was furnished with everything he required. An imperial *ukase* was issued by which Karr was entrusted with the command of the South Russian troops. The forces under him comprised 20,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry under General Freyman at Bugulminska, 15,000 troops under Colonel Czernicseff, Governor of Zinbirska, and two detachments of the Life Guard under Colonel Naumann, the latter being generally considered the flower of the Russian army.

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General Karr left that night for the scene of action. Although he prided himself on the celerity of his movements, he omitted to take into consideration one important point in such tactics. His illustrious models, Alexander the Great, Frederick the Great, Hannibal, etc., were also in the habit of moving quickly, but they took their troops with them, while Karr thought it more expedient to travel alone. But, even so, he did not go fast enough. A Cossack horseman who left St. Petersburg at the same time as he did arrived a day and a half ahead of him, informed Pugascheff of his coming, and acquainted him with the disposition of General Karr's troops. Pugascheff at once sent a body of Cossacks to attack the General's rear, and thus prevent his meeting with the Life Guard.

General Karr did not allow any one at Bugulminska to interfere with his plans. They were absolutely settled, and nothing that his colleague Freyman might suggest could alter them. He said it was not so much a matter of war as of the chase. This wild animal must be captured alive, if possible. Czernicseff, with 1,200 troopers and twelve guns, must already be near at hand, as he had been instructed by Karr to cross the river Szakmara and oppose Pugascheff's retreat. In the meantime, Karr himself, with picked men, would attack him in the van. Thus, Pugascheff would be caught between two fires. Czernicseff hardly thought his superior ignorant

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enough to allow him to be attacked by the overwhelming force of his antagonist, nor did he think that Pugascheff would show such a lack of tactical knowledge as to bring all his troops to bear on a small detachment, while before him lay a powerful army. But, in point of fact, both these things happened. Pugascheff calmly allowed the enemy to cross the frozen river, and then attacked him on both flanks, taking the precaution to break the ice in his rear. The entire force was destroyed, and twelve guns captured. Czernicseff and thirty-five officers who were taken prisoners were hanged on trees along the roadside. Then Pugascheff, intoxicated with his success, hurled his entire army against Karr. The two forces met at a Cossack village about thirty-six miles from Bugulminska. To General Karr's astonishment, instead of meeting an undisciplined mob, he had to contend with a veteran army, well furnished with cannon. Freyman advised him, now that he was deprived of the services of Czernicseff's squadron, not to begin operations with the cavalry, but to entrench himself in the village and await the enemy's attack. A series of surprises then befell Karr. He saw the supposed mob advancing with drawn swords; saw that they did not flinch before the hottest fire. He blanched at the intrepid bravery with which they charged the position he had fancied secure. These men that he had considered bandits were heroes. But what irritated him most of all was that

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these Cossacks knew how to serve their guns. In St. Petersburg, Cossacks are not enlisted in the artillery, in order that they may not learn how to use cannon. Yet here the guns, but recently captured, were served as if their gunners had been a lifetime at the work, and their balls had already set the village on fire in several places. General Karr ordered his entire force to the charge, while, with his reserves, he attacked the enemy's flank, driving it in. But, among the 1,500 horsemen under his command, 300 were Cossacks, and these took advantage of the thick of the battle to desert to the enemy. When General Karr saw this, his consternation was so great that he wavered, and fled. Throwing discipline to the winds, his soldiers abandoned their comrades at the firing line, and retreated in disorder.

Pugascheff's Cossacks pursued the Russians for a distance of thirty miles, but did not succeed in capturing the General, whose fear had lent him wings. When he arrived at Bugulminska, he learned that Czernicseff's cavalry had been cut to pieces, that the Life Guard had been taken prisoners, and that twenty-one guns had fallen into the hands of the rebels. These untoward tidings gave him such a bad cold in the head that he was sent back to St. Petersburg, where the tarok party awaited him. That very evening he was unlucky enough to lose his twenty-first card, which caused the Tsarina to remark that it was not the first loss of a similar

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number (referring to the twenty-one guns) that he had incurred, an observation which provoked much laughter at the Russian court.

This victory marked the zenith of Pugascheff's success. Perhaps he might have gone on further still, had he remained true to the two tremendous passions which had been the cause of his rapid rise—the one being to marry the Tsarina, the other to grind the nobility under his feet. Which of these two purposes was the bolder? From their realisation, he was prevented only by the merest circumstance. The defeat of General Karr had given him an open path to Moscow, where 100,000 serfs were only awaiting his coming to revolt against the tyranny of the aristocracy and to form a new Russian Empire. Forty million slaves awaited their liberator in the person of the Cossack pretender. But he suddenly lost the firmness, the ideals and the ambitions that had theretofore possessed him—and all through a pair of beautiful eyes.

The victory of Bugulminska was the signal for the coming of a number of envoys from the Bashkirs with promises of allegiance. One of these envoys brought him a young girl to be his wife. The name of this girl was Uliyanka, and, from the moment that Pugascheff set eyes on her, his heart no longer belonged to the Tsarina. The Cossack now had such faith in the virtue of his star that he did not act with his usual strictness. Uliyanka became his favourite, and he appointed Salavke, her father, to be ruler of

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the Bashkirs. Then he gathered about his person all manner of pomp and ceremony. He clothed himself in the finest court costumes, and decorated his companions with medals taken from the bodies of the Russian officers he had slain. He created them generals, colonels, counts, and princes. The Cossack Czika, his prime adherent, was appointed generalissimo, and to this man he gave over the command of half his army. He made an issue of roubles bearing his portrait under the title of Tsar Peter III., and published a circular with the words, "*Redivivus et ultor.*" Having no silver mines, he ordered the coins to be struck from copper, which was plentiful. This example, by the way, was also followed by the Russians, who issued copper roubles by the million, and made generous use of them in the payment of debts.

Pugascheff now substituted for the comedy of a rebellion the farce of a reign. Instead of marching against the unprotected cities of the Empire, he besieged its fortresses, and, forgetting the fair ideal of his dreams, he consoled himself with the sordidness of a woman of the people.

Czika, the generalissimo, was ordered to take the fortress of Ufa with the troops under his command. It was now the month of January 1774, and the winter was the coldest ever known in the country's history. The forest trees split with a noise like thunder, and the birds of the air were frozen as they flew. To engage in

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siege operations under such conditions was impossible. The earth hardened to such a depth that trenches could not be dug, and it was almost impossible to live in tents on the open plain.

The neighbouring towns had already been occupied by the rebel leaders, who thus cut off all supplies from the Russians. In Orenburg, they had already eaten the garrison horses, and the commissary, Kicshoff by name, was seized with the idea of boiling the skins of the slaughtered animals, cutting them into slices, and mixing them with paste. This food, so-called, was given out to the soldiers, and caused the ravage of a disease among the garrison that incapacitated half the troops. On January 13th, Colonel Vallenstiern endeavoured to cut his way through the enemy's lines. He took with him 2,500 men, but returned with less than seventy. The remainder were left on the field. Certainly, they required no more food. A few hundred hussars, however, succeeded in breaking through, and these men carried to St. Petersburg the news of what Tsar Peter III. (who was now enjoying his seventh resurrection) was doing. The Tsarina began to tire of the homage of her admirers, so she called together her generals, and asked which of them was willing to head an expedition, in the depth of winter, into the wilderness of snows. This meant no game at war; it meant attempting the subjection of a powerful force, which, if not checked, would soon

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be a match for the most efficient troops of Europe. Four men replied that in Russia nothing was impossible. The names of these four men were Prince Galiczin, General Bibikoff, Colonel Larionoff, and Michelson, a Swedish officer. But their number was soon reduced to two. The first battle of Bozal proved too much for Larionoff, who returned home, defeated. The hardships of the campaign spelt the end of Bibikoff's usefulness, for he died on the snow-swept plain.

Only Galiczin and Michelson were left. The Swede had already become famous by reason of his prowess in the Turkish wars, but, when he marched from the fortress of Bozal against the rebels, his troops consisted of no more than 400 cavalry and 600 infantry, with four guns. With this small force, he attempted the relief of the fortress of Ufa. But, though his movements were speedy, those of Czika's spies were speedier still, and the rebel chieftain was apprised not only of the approach of the enemy, but also of their numerical weakness. He anticipated that they merely intended to reinforce the garrison of Ufa, so he despatched against them only 3,000 men, with nine guns, ordering them to hold the mountain passes which blocked the way to Ufa. But Michelson chose another route. His men travelled on sledges, and so fast did they proceed that, when they reached Czika's camp and attacked his vanguard, nobody opposed them. The panic-stricken rebels fled, leaving two guns in Michelson's

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possession. The Swede knew well that the sound of the guns would act as a signal for the arrival of the enemy's 3,000 men who occupied the passes, and that he was in danger of being caught between two fires; so he hurriedly entrenched 200 of his men beneath their sledges, while, with the remainder of his troops, he advanced to the town of Czernakuka, the destination of Czika's fleeing forces. Losing no time, Michelson threw himself in the forefront of his hussars, and charged the main body of the enemy. This bold and unexpected attack was demoralising in its effect; the centre of the camp broke, and, in a few moments, Michelson found himself in possession of a battery of cannon. He then directed his attention to the right and left wings. The result of the surprise was that Czika's troops were utterly routed, leaving behind them fifty-six guns. The victor then retraced his steps to the spot where he had left his 200 men entrenched beneath their sledges, and, with this addition to his forces, entirely surrounded the enemy, who surrendered after leaving many dead on the field. The conquering Swede notified the commander of the Ufa garrison that the road was clear, and that he would soon receive the cannon captured from the enemy. When about a hundred and twenty versts distant from Ufa, he came up with Czika, who, with forty-two of his officers, was endeavouring to escape. Michelson captured them all, and that they were not all

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hanged was due only to the fact that the plain was destitute of trees.

Prince Galiczin, in the meantime, was pursuing Pugascheff. The Russian general had with him 6,000 men, but he did not catch up with the pretender until the first days of March. Pugascheff awaited his enemy at Taticseva. This so-called fortress, which was surrounded by wooden walls, may have been sufficient to protect sheep from robbers, but it was certainly not fit for warlike defence. The rebel leader, however, did not lose his head, and proved himself no mean opponent. He covered the fences surrounding the fort with snow, on which he poured water, rendering them almost as solid as stone, and at the same time so slippery that no one could surmount them. Here he awaited Galiczin with a part of his army, the main body of which occupied Orenburg. The Russian general approached cautiously. The fog was so thick that the opposing bodies perceived each other only when they were within firing distance. A fierce hand-to-hand combat followed. Pugascheff, at the head of the flower of his troops, was always to be found where danger threatened, but his efforts were fruitless. The Russians finally succeeded in crossing the ice walls, capturing his cannon, and driving him out of the stronghold. The victory was complete, but it was attained at the cost of the lives of a thousand Russians. Pugascheff retreated with 4,000 men and seven guns, but with the loss of his prestige

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and of his belief in his star. The Tsar, who but yesterday had proclaimed his campaign of revenge, was now compelled to go back to the desert, which did not receive him kindly. Only now did the real terrors of the campaign begin. It was a war such as can be carried on only in Russia, where, in the thousands and thousands of acres of desert, bands of wild marauders wander, all haters of the Empire and all eager for revenge. Pugascheff took refuge among these tribes. Again he attacked Galiczin at Kargozki, and again he was defeated, this time losing his last gun. Here Uliyanka, his favourite, was captured, if, indeed, she did not betray him to the enemy. He himself managed to escape only by fording the river Myaes on horseback.

This is the border of Asia, and it is here that Russia ends and Siberia begins. There are no longer any villages, but only military outposts, a day's march distant from each other, and, along the ranges of the Ural Mountains, the so-called "factories." The Wozkrezenzki factory, which is situated at a point about a day's march from the mountains, is separated from the Zimski factory by virgin forests. In both of these factories, cinnamon and paints are made. Near at hand are the powder factory of Uzizka and the bomb factory of Zatkin, whose labourers are Russian convicts. At the junction of the rivers are several small towns, guarded by native Cossacks, while other towns are occupied by regular

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Russian detachments that have fallen into disgrace. To this region came Pugascheff with what was left of his army. Galiczin followed him for some time, but finally decided that, in a country whose roads are marked only by trenches, the pursuit of an enemy whose only object was to get away as fast and as far as possible was hopeless. Pugascheff reinforced his meagre army from the tribes of the Ural district, who deserted their huts, and rallied to his standard.

Suddenly the winter came to an end, and was followed by those soft, mellow April days which are seen only in Siberia, when at night the temperature sinks below the freezing point, while in the daytime the melting snow covers everything with water, every brook becomes a river, and every river a vast ocean. The pursued might still make progress in his sledge, but the pursuer would have a hard task confronting him in the wilderness of fathomless morasses. Yet the intrepid Michelson dared to follow Pugascheff under these almost hopeless conditions. Even as the Siberian wolf who has tasted the blood of his victim never leaves his track until he has run him down, so this bold Swede held to the pursuit of his opponent. All told, cavalry, gunners, and infantry, his forces consisted of no more than a thousand men. Each man had to carry provisions for a fortnight and 100 cartridges. The cavalry had guns as well as sabres, so that they would be in a position to fight on foot, and the gunners added axes to

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their equipment, so that they might also do duty as sappers. All were prepared to swim if the occasion arose. With this force, Michelson pursued Pugascheff through innumerable hostile tribes, people who knew no mercy and whose language he did not understand. Yet he faced the danger intrepidly, even as the sailor smiles at the terrors of the deep. On May 7th, he was attacked near the Zimski factory by the father of the girl, Uliyanka, who was leading 2,000 Bashkirs to Pugascheff's support. Michelson defeated them, and captured their cannon. From one of his prisoners, he learned that Beloborodoff, one of the dukes created by Pugascheff, was in the neighbourhood with a large force of Russian soldiers who had deserted from the regular ranks. Michelson surprised them near the river Yeresen, and forced them to take refuge in the Zatkin factory. He rode along to the walls of the factory, and, when he was so near that his voice could be distinctly heard, he began to rebuke them for their desertion, and urged them to return to their old allegiance. More than two thousand shots were directed at him from the windows of the factory, but, when the soldiers saw that he remained unharmed, they believed him to be invulnerable, threw open the gates, and joined his army. From these men, Michelson learned Pugascheff's plans—that he had captured three fortresses, Magitnaya, Stepnaya, and Petroluskaya, and was at that moment laying siege to Troiczka.

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But Michelson arrived too late to save the last-named stronghold. When he arrived there, he found nothing but ruins, dead bodies, and the remains of Russian officers hanging from trees. Pugascheff, who had heard of his opponent's approach, laid a cunning trap to capture his pursuer. He decked out some of his own soldiers in the uniforms of the dead Russians, and sent them as messengers to Michelson conveying word that Colonel Colon would meet him near Varlamora. It was not until he was attacked, and two of his guns captured, that Michelson perceived the ruse by which he had been deceived. But, although surrounded on all sides, he at once charged Pugascheff's centre, cut his opponent's forces in two, and turned seeming defeat into victory. Pugascheff fled with only a few hundred followers, and escaped into the interior of Siberia.

But Michelson's troubles were not yet over. He suddenly found Zalavotka in his rear with a Bashkir force, he having already reduced the Zatkin factory and slaughtered all its inmates, including women and children. The Bashkirs held a strong position near the river Aie. They had destroyed the bridges, and confidently awaited Michelson's advance. At dawn, Michelson ordered forty of his cavalry, each man taking besides a rifleman behind him, to swim the river and hold the opposite bank until the rest of the troops joined them. In this way, the Russians crossed the river without a bridge,

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dragging after them their cannon tied to trees. The Bashkirs fled, but, while Michelson was chasing them with his cavalry, his artillery was attacked by a fresh force, and he was compelled to return to their help. It was Pugascheff himself who, backed by well-equipped troops, was his new opponent. The fight went on for many hours, but late at night the rebels retreated, and marched, under cover of darkness, to the fortress of Ufa. But Michelson learned their destination, cut his way through the forest, and again met Pugascheff before the walls of Ufa. Michelson again won the battle, but his soldiers were in a lamentable condition. Hardly a whole piece of clothing or an intact boot could be found among them, and their ammunition had declined to two charges apiece. So he retreated to Ufa to replenish his equipment.

After Michelson had driven Pugascheff away from Ufa, the pretender utterly routed the Russian leaders who had been sent against him from other directions. The forces of London, Melgunoff, Duve, and Jacobovics melted before him, and, in their very presence, he set fire to the town of Birsk. He reduced the fortress of Ossa, where he found guns and ammunition, and then advanced with remarkable speed upon Kazan. Kazan is the seat of an archbishop, and there is kept the crown used by the Tsars at coronation. If Pugascheff could get the Archbishop of Kazan to place this crown on his head, who could deny that he was the Tsar of All the

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Russias? The defenders of Kazan consisted of only 1,500 riflemen, under Generals Brand and Banner, but the citizens of the town rallied vigorously to the walls. The day before the siege began, General Potemkin, accompanied by General Larionoff, arrived at Kazan. The Russian camp was overrun with generals, but, nevertheless, the rebel troops carried the place. Pugascheff himself was the first to scale the walls. Larionoff fled to Nijni Novgorod, and the other generals took refuge in the citadel.

Pugascheff gave up the town to the tender mercy of his soldiers. The Archbishop of Kazan received him at the cathedral, and made him a gift of half a million roubles in gold. The crown had been carried off to the citadel, but the archbishop promised to crown him with it as soon as it was obtainable. Pugascheff set fire to all quarters of the town, hoping thereby to instil terror into the hearts of those in the citadel. But Michelson was still to be reckoned with. He was now on his way to Kazan, hardly allowing his troops time to sleep en route. He sent no news, but where he marched he left his mark. At Burnova, he dispersed a force of rebels who attacked him. At Brayevana, he defeated another detachment. At the fortress of Ossa, he learned that Pugascheff had crossed the river Kuma. Then he knew that he would find the pseudo-Tsar at Kazan. He found no boats on the river Kuma, so he swam it. Two other rivers were crossed in the same way.

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When he arrived at Arkz, he heard the noise of cannon in the direction of Kazan. Giving his men time for only one hour's sleep, he marched through the night, and at dawn he saw by the smoke on the horizon that Kazan was in flames. When Pugascheff's outposts sent word to their leader that Michelson was approaching, he cursed. Was this man a devil, that he should be at his very walls when he believed him to be 300 miles away? He decided at all cost to keep the news from the garrison in the citadel. He stationed a portion of his men in the town of Tazicsin, seven miles out of Kazan, to obstruct the onward march of his hated foe.

He then proclaimed himself Tsar Peter III. But, in the middle of the ceremony, which was held in the market-place of Tazicsin, a haggard woman rushed to his feet and covered him with kisses. It was Pugascheff's wife, who had thought her husband long since dead. They had married very young, and Pugascheff himself believed her in her grave; but the poor woman recognised him by his voice. Pugascheff remained calm. He lifted the woman to her feet, and said to an officer standing by: "This woman's husband was a dear and valued friend of mine. See that she is cared for." But every one suspected that he himself was the husband of Marianka, and the incident made a profound impression on the rebel forces. The next morning, Michelson sent word into the town that he was coming, and requested the assistance

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of all loyal troops. Pugascheff attacked him with fury, and for a time it seemed as if fortune had again favoured him. On the third day of the conflict, when Michelson was entirely surrounded, he put himself at the head of his small force, and charged Pugascheff's army with the impetuosity born of despair. The rebels' line was broken, and they fled, leaving 3,000 dead on the field, and 5,000 men taken prisoners.

Kazan was free, but Russia was still in danger. After his defeat at Kazan, Pugascheff fled, but not toward Siberia. This time, he marched straight toward Moscow, the heart of the Russian Empire. As soon as he had crossed the Volga, the people began to join his standard, and the old revolt of the peasantry against the nobility was enflamed into new vigour. One after another, the towns opened their gates to Pugascheff, and every castle within a radius of one hundred miles was burned to the ground. The farther he advanced, the larger his army became. Forts were occupied, towns burned and looted, and the troops which gave the rebels battle routed. In the battle of Zariczin, every Russian officer was killed, and the entire force captured. Pugascheff now had under his command 25,000 men and a large number of cannon, and the way to Moscow would have been open to him if the dreaded Michelson had not been in his rear. This remarkable man feared no enemy, however formidable, and he actually drove before him Pugascheff's large force, as the tiger chases a

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herd of boars. The pretender felt that this man was his evil star. Just beyond the town of Sarepta, he found a convenient battle-ground, and there he disposed his army. It was on a hill which is divided by a steep foot-path, this path being intersected by another. Pugascheff stationed his best men on the ascending path while the remainder he sent to cover his flanks. If Michelson used his ordinary method of attack, he would advance up the little path leading to the steeper one, and, if he then succeeded, his opponents could advance from both ends of the intersecting road, and so cut him to pieces. But Michelson was not to be caught so easily. While he bombarded the position with his artillery, he himself, with Colonel Melin, attacked both flanks of the enemy. Pugascheff saw that he was spitted on his own toasting-fork. His retreating flanks were harried by the fire intended for his opponent's troops, and, in order to escape, he had to cut his way through the ranks of his own men. He fled with only sixty men, crossed the Volga, and secreted himself in the forests. His last battle had been fought.

The Russian troops surrounded the forest in which Pugascheff and his men were hiding. Yet his dreams were still of glory. In the wilderness, he pictured the shining dome of the Kremlin, and the Tsarina reclining at his feet. For days and nights, his food consisted of horse-flesh, eaten with meadow-grass instead of salt. One night, as he was preparing his frugal meal

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before the fire, one of the three Cossacks who were all his remaining army, said to him, "Your comedy is played out, Pugascheff!" The pretender leaped to his feet with the words, "Fool, I am your Tsar!" At the same time, he cut the speaker to the ground. The two others rushed at him, bound him hand and foot, tied him to the back of a horse, took him to Ural Sorodok, and gave him up to General Zuvaroff. This was the very Ural Sorodok from which he had set out on his self-appointed mission. He was taken to Moscow, where he was condemned to be sliced in pieces while still alive. The sentence was confirmed by the Tsarina, although her beautiful eyes were the cause of the adventurer's terrible end. But the executioner was more merciful. There was no clause in the sentence stating where the process of slicing should begin, so he began with the head—for which bit of tenderness he was exiled to Siberia. It was just about this time that Katherine changed her favourite. Potemkin, quite a handsome man, took Orloff's place.

A PASSION IN THE DESERT

BY

HONORÉ DE BALZAC

"WHAT a frightful exhibition!" she exclaimed, as we were leaving the menagerie of M. Martin, where she had just been watching that intrepid performer—to use the expression of the advertisement—"working" with his hyena.

"By what means," she continued, "can he have trained his animals so well that he is sufficiently certain of their affection to——?"

"Why," I interrupted, "what seems such an enigma to you is really very natural."

"Oh!" she exclaimed with an incredulous smile.

"Do you consider beasts entirely without passions?" I asked. "If so, let me assure you it is in our power to teach them all the vices which belong to our own state of civilisation."

She looked at me in astonishment.

"However," I resumed, "when I saw M. Martin for the first time, I confess that I, like you, uttered an exclamation of surprise. I was standing at the time beside an old soldier who had come in with me, and whose appearance I found very interesting. His right leg had been amputated; his head, with its fearless poise,

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was marked with the scars of war, and told of Napoleon's battles. There was a certain frankness and good humour about this old veteran which prejudiced me at once in his favour. No doubt, he was one of those troopers whom nothing can surprise; who find something amusing even in the dying spasms of a comrade, and shroud him or strip him with equal want of compunction; who are proof against bullets, quick to reach conclusions, and who hold fellowship with the Devil. He had watched the proprietor of the menagerie very attentively, and, as the latter was leaving the cage, my companion's face assumed an expression of mocking disdain such as the wise assume to distinguish themselves from ordinary fools.

"When I made a remark about the courage of M. Martin, he smiled in a knowing way, and answered with a toss of his head:

"'Oh, that is a well-known trick.'

"'How is that? I should be much obliged, indeed, to have you explain the secret of it,' I rejoined.

"After a few minutes spent in getting acquainted, we went to dine at the first restaurant we found. A bottle of champagne with the dessert brought back past events to the mind of this curious old soldier with wonderful clearness, and he told me his story. I understood then why he could say 'a well-known trick.'"

When we reached her home, she coaxed me so much, and made so many promises, that I

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consented to write the tale of the old soldier, and the next day she received the following episode from an epic which might properly be entitled, "The French in Egypt."

At the time of the exploring tour of General Desaix into upper Egypt, a Provencal soldier had fallen into the hands of the Maugrabins, and was carried off by these Arabs into the desert beyond the Falls of the Nile. In order to put a safe distance between themselves and the French army, the Maugrabins proceeded by forced marches, and did not stop until evening. They pitched their camp about a well, surrounded by a fringe of palm-trees, near which they had previously buried some provisions. As they suspected no plans of escape on the part of their prisoner, they contented themselves with tying his hands, and, after having eaten some dried dates and given fodder to the horses, they went to sleep.

However, when the brave fellow saw that his enemies were no longer watching him, he secured a scimeter with the aid of his teeth, and, holding the blade between his knees, he cut the cords depriving him of the use of his hands, and was free. He lost no time in taking possession of a rifle and a dagger, and providing himself with a hatchet, a supply of dried dates, a small sack of fodder, some powder and balls, he mounted a horse and spurred away in the direction of the French camp. His horse, however, was weary

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from the day's travel, and, as the Frenchman was anxious to be once more safe in camp, he urged the poor animal on until, with its flanks torn by the spurs, it fell dead from exhaustion, leaving its rider in the midst of the desert.

For some time he proceeded on foot through the sand with all the desperation of a galley slave seeking freedom, but was obliged to stop as darkness was coming on, and notwithstanding the splendour of the oriental heavens at night, he was too tired to go on. Fortunately, he had been able to reach a hillock at the summit of which grew a number of palms, the foliage of which had been visible a long way off, and had awakened in the heart of the weary traveller the most pleasant anticipations. His exhaustion was so great that he threw himself down on a stone, shaped by capricious nature into the form of a camp-bed, and went to sleep without precautions of any kind for self-defence. He had risked his life, but his last thought was one of regret. He already repented of leaving the Maugrabins, whose wandering life began to appeal to him, now that he was helpless and far away from them.

He was awakened by the sun, its rays falling perpendicularly on the stone and heating it to an intolerable degree. Unfortunately, the soldier had taken his position on the side of the palms opposite to that on which the shadow of the foliage fell. He looked at those solitary trees, and was struck by their familiar appearance:

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they recalled to his mind the elegant shafts and crowns, the long leaves, characteristic of the cathedral of Arles.

Having counted the trees, he began to look about him, and the deepest despondency took possession of his soul. He saw before him a boundless ocean. In every direction, as far as the eye could reach, the sands of the desert glittered like the blade of a lance in a strong light. He could not tell whether it was a sea of glass, or a thousand lakes smooth like a mirror. Carried along in waves, a fiery vapour whirled over the shifting sand. The oriental sky shone in its hopeless brazenness; nothing was left for the imagination to supply. Heaven and earth were on fire.

The silence was fearful in its weird and terrible majesty. The infinity and boundlessness of the whole oppressed the soul on every side. Not a cloud in the sky; not a breath in the air; not an incident to break the monotony on the wide expanse of those still, rippled sands. The horizon, like that of the open sea in fair weather, was marked by a line of light as straight and thin as if cut with the blade of a sword. The soldier embraced the trunk of one of the palms as if it were the body of a friend. Then, in the shelter of the straight, slender shadow which the tree cast upon the rock, he wept. Thus he remained for a time, looking with deep sadness upon the inexorable scene presented to his view. He called aloud as if to

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sound the solitude, but his voice, almost lost in the hollows of the hillock, came back with hardly an echo. The echo was in his own heart. The man was only twenty years old, yet he loaded his rifle——

“There is always time enough for that,” he said to himself, as he replaced the weapon of deliverance on the ground beside him.

Looking about, now at the dusky earth and now at the blue sky, the soldier began to dream of France. He recalled with almost a sense of pleasure the ill-smelling gutters of Paris; he saw again the towns through which they had passed, the faces of his comrades, and the most trifling incidents of his life.

His southern imagination represented to him the stones of his beloved Provence in the waves of heat, undulating over what seemed to be a cloth spread in the desert. Fearing the dangers of a mirage to his reason, he descended the hillock upon the side opposite the one he had climbed the evening before. Here he made a discovery which made him rejoice. It was a sort of cave, formed by nature among the immense fragments of rock composing the hillock. The remnants of a mat told that this place of refuge had been made use of at some time. Furthermore, he perceived some date-palms, loaded with fruit, only a short distance away. Then the instinct which causes a human being to cling to life began to assert itself. He found himself hoping that he would live

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until some band of Maugrabins should pass that way, or perhaps he would hear the roar of cannon, for at that very hour Napoleon was on his march through Egypt.

Cheered by this thought, the Frenchman proceeded to bring down some of the clusters of ripe fruit under the weight of which the date-palms seemed to bend. The flavour of this un hoped-for manna convinced him that the former occupant of the cave had cultivated the palms, the fresh, luscious pulp proclaiming his predecessor's skill.

The Frenchman's state of mind was suddenly changed from abject despair to almost silly joy. He once more climbed the hill, and, during the remainder of the day, busied himself with cutting down one of the sterile trees which had afforded him shelter the night before. A vague reminiscence brought to his mind the thought of wild beasts of the desert, and, surmising the probability of their coming to drink from the spring which issued from the rock on which he lived, but which was soon swallowed up by the desert sand, he determined to insure himself against their visits by placing a barrier across the entrance to his hermitage. In spite of his industry, however, and the strength which fear of being devoured by wild animals, during sleep, gave him, he found it impossible to cut the tree into several pieces that day; but he did succeed in felling it. When, toward evening, this king of the sand tumbled down, the noise

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of its fall resounded in the distance, and the very solitude seemed to groan. The soldier trembled as if he had heard a voice pronouncing a curse upon him, but, like the heir who does not long mourn the death of a relative, he cut away from the splendid tree the great, green fronds which are its picturesque ornament, and made use of them in repairing the mat upon which he intended to spend the night. Fatigued by the heat and labour of the day, he was soon sleeping soundly beneath the reddish ceiling of the damp cave.

In the middle of the night, his sleep was broken by a peculiar sound. He sat upright, and the profound stillness enabled him to recognise the sound of breathing—but too deep and powerful to come from the chest of a human being.

Profound fear, further augmented by the darkness, the silence and the working of his imagination, chilled his heart. He felt his hair stand on end. By straining his eyes until they almost started from their sockets, he perceived in the darkness two faint yellow lights. At first, he attributed these to the reflection of the fruit he had gathered, but soon the remarkable brilliancy of the night aided him by degrees to distinguish the objects about him in the cave, and he saw an enormous animal, lying on the ground a couple of feet away.

Was it a lion—a tiger—a crocodile?

The Frenchman's education was not sufficient to help him determine to what species his enemy

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belonged, but his fear was only the greater as his ignorance allowed him to imagine all kinds of combined evils. He endured the torture of listening to the breath of the animal coming and going, not losing a sound, and not daring to make the least movement.

An odour like that of a fox, only much more penetrating, heavier so to speak, filled the cave, and, when the Frenchman had blown it from his nostrils, his terror was supreme, for he could then no longer question the reality of that terrible companion's presence, in whose royal dwelling he had encamped. Soon the reflection of the light, breaking in the east, illuminated the den, and produced an almost imperceptible lustre on the resplendent and spotted skin of a panther. This specimen of the Egyptian lion slept rolled up like a great dog occupying a comfortable berth at the door of his master's house. Its face was turned toward the Frenchman; its eyes opened for a moment, then closed again.

A thousand confused thoughts passed through the mind of the panther's prisoner. First, he wanted to kill it with a shot from his rifle, but he saw that there was not enough space between them to enable him to use this means, as the muzzle of the gun would reach beyond the animal. And if it should awaken! That thought rendered him motionless.

He could hear the beating of his heart in the midst of the silence, and cursed the pulsation

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caused by the rush of blood through his veins, dreading to disturb the sleep which afforded him an opportunity to plan an escape. He put both his hands on the scimeter with the idea of severing the head of his enemy, but the difficulty of cutting that tough skin, covered with dense hair, led him to give up the idea. To attempt flight would be certain death, he thought.

He preferred the chances of a fight, and decided to wait until daylight. He did not have long to wait. The Frenchman was now able to examine the panther more closely, and noticed that its muzzle was covered with blood.

"She has just eaten," he thought, not taking the pains to consider whether the feast had been human flesh or not. "She won't be hungry when she wakes."

It was a female. The fur on her belly and thighs was glistening white, and several velvet-like spots formed pretty bracelets about her paws. The muscular tail was of the same whiteness, but had a series of black rings encircling the end. The upper skin, yellow like unburnished gold, and very sleek and soft, bore the characteristic spots, shaded in the form of rosettes, which distinguish the panther from other branches of the cat family.

His calm, formidable hostess was snoring away as contentedly as a household puss asleep on an ottoman. Her bloody paws, sinewy and well armed, were stretched out in front of

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her, and her head, with its straight parted beard like threads of gold, rested upon them.

If she had appeared thus in a cage, the Frenchman would certainly have admired the grace of the brute and the marked contrast of pronounced colours, which gave a royal splendour to her robe; but at that moment his appreciation of these points was marred by the threatening prospect.

At the presence of the panther, even though she slept, he experienced the effect which the magnetic eyes of a serpent are said to produce upon a nightingale.

The soldier's courage failed him before this peril, though it would doubtless have been roused by cannon belching forth fire and shell. After all, a single courageous idea filled his mind, and dried the cold perspiration rolling down his forehead. As in the case of men whom misfortune drives to a point where they defy death, he saw, without being conscious of it, a tragedy in this adventure, and determined to play his rôle with honour to the end.

"The day before yesterday, the Arabs might have killed me," he soliloquised, and, considering himself as dead, he awaited bravely, but with lively curiosity, the awakening of his enemy.

When the sun rose, the panther suddenly opened her eyes, stretched out her legs as if to dissipate the cramp, and yawned—by this last operation displaying a formidable set of teeth and a grooved, rasp-like tongue.

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"Why, she acts like a coquette," thought the Frenchman, as he watched her rolling about, performing the prettiest and daintiest movements imaginable. She licked the blood-stains from her paws and muzzle, and stroked her head several times very gently.

"Well, I suppose I might make my toilet, too," said the Frenchman to himself, as his reviving courage somewhat restored his sense of humour. "We are going to wish each other good morning." With this remark, he possessed himself of the dagger stolen from the Maugrabins.

At this moment, the panther turned her head toward the Frenchman, and looked at him steadily. The fixedness of those steely eyes and their almost intolerable glare made the man shudder the more so as the animal began to approach him. But he looked at her affectionately, and, fixing his eyes upon her, as if he wished to mesmerise her, he permitted her to come very close; then he passed his hand along her body from head to tail, stroking her as gently and lovingly as if he were caressing a beautiful woman. He could feel the projections which marked the vertebræ of her supple spine; the animal raised her tail at the agreeable sensation, and the expression of her eyes became more gentle. When the Frenchman repeated this interesting blandishment for the third time, she began to purr as our cats do when expressing pleasure. But the sound coming from the

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throat of this animal was so deep and strong that it reverberated through the cave like the low notes of a church organ. The soldier, understanding the value of his caresses, redoubled them in his efforts to intoxicate this exacting courtesan.

When he felt sure of having allayed the ferocity of his capricious companion, whose hunger had so fortunately been satisfied the night before, he arose and left the cave. The panther permitted his departure, to be sure, but, when he had climbed the hill, she bounded after him with the lightness of a sparrow hopping from branch to branch, and rubbed herself against his legs, at the same time curving her back like a cat. She looked at her visitor with a much less savage expression, and uttered that peculiar sound which naturalists compare to the grating of a saw. "She certainly is exacting," thought the Frenchman, with a smile.

He tried playing with her ears, stroked her belly, and scratched her head briskly with his nails, and, perceiving his success, even pricked her skull with the point of his dagger, intending to kill her at once. But the hardness of the bone caused him to doubt the success of such an attempt.

This sultana of the desert gave evidence of her appreciation of the efforts of her slave by raising her head and stretching her neck, giving further proof of her pleasure by the contented attitude she assumed. It suddenly occurred

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to the Frenchman that, in order to slay this savage princess with a single blow, he must stab her in the throat, and he raised his arm accordingly. Then the panther, doubtless satiated with his caresses, laid herself gently at his feet, giving him a glance now and then which, in spite of her natural ferocity of expression, bore a certain amount of good-will. The poor fellow ate his dates, leaning against a tree, looking now across the desert in search of a deliverer, and then again at the panther to assure himself of her uncertain clemency. The panther looked suspiciously at the ground where the date stones fell, as he dropped them one by one. She watched the movements of the Frenchman with businesslike care. The conclusion reached as the result of her observation of him must have been favourable. When he had finished his meal, she began licking his shoes, completely removing the dust caked in the wrinkles of the leather, with her long, rough tongue.

"Ah, but when she gets hungry!" thought the soldier. In spite of the uneasiness which this thought gave him, he became absorbed in measuring the proportions of the panther with his eyes. She was certainly one of the finest specimens of her class, being not less than three feet in height and five in length, not counting her tail. This powerful member was fully three feet long, and rounded like a cudgel. Her head, as large as that of a lioness, gave

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indications of great shrewdness, and, although the cold cruelty characteristic of the tiger family dominated its expression, there was in the effect of it something which made him think of a clever woman. The whole appearance of this solitary queen suggested the gayety of a drunken Nero. She had quenched her thirst with blood, and now wished to be amused.

The soldier tried walking back and forth, which the panther allowed, contenting herself with following him with her eyes. She seemed less like a faithful dog, however, than a great angora, suspicious of everything, even her master's movements. In looking about, he saw the carcass of his horse beside the spring, whither the panther had dragged it. About two-thirds of it was eaten. This discovery somewhat reassured the Frenchman; it was no trouble now to explain the absence of the panther on the evening before and the respect she had shown for him during his sleep.

Fortune having so far favoured him, he resolved to take his chances for the future. His purpose was to remain peaceably with the panther for the rest of the day, neglecting no opportunity of taming her and winning her favour.

Having decided upon his plan, he returned to her, and had the great satisfaction of seeing her wag her tail slightly. He sat down beside her, and began to play with her, holding her paws and her muzzle, turning back her ears,

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rolling her over on her back, and rubbing her soft, warm sides. She evidently enjoyed these attentions, and, when he stroked the fur on her paws, she carefully drew in her curved claws.

The Frenchman, who throughout this performance had kept one hand on his dagger, still thought of plunging it into the side of the overconfident panther, but feared being killed by her during her death-struggle. On the other hand, he was conscious of a touch of pity moving him to spare such a harmless creature.

It seemed as though he had found a friend in that boundless desert. He thought of his first mistress, whom he had called "Mignon," by way of antithesis, for she was of such an atrociously jealous disposition that, during all the time that their passion lasted, he had lived in constant fear of the knife with which she threatened him. This reminiscence of his youth suggested the idea of naming the panther whose agility, grace, and gentleness he admired in proportion as his fear decreased.

By evening, he had become accustomed to his perilous position, and almost liked the danger of it. The education of his companion meanwhile had so far progressed that she would look at him when he called "Mignon" in a falsetto voice. At sunset, Mignon uttered a strangely melancholy cry, which she repeated several times.

"She has been well brought up," thought the soldier. "She is saying her prayers." This

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mental pleasantries, however, only occurred to him at the sight of the peaceful attitude his companion had resumed.

"Come now, my little blonde, I am going to let you retire first," said he, trusting to the nimbleness of his legs to get as far away as possible and to seek another place of shelter when she should be asleep.

Impatiently he awaited the time for flight, and, when it came, he ran away rapidly in the direction of the Nile. But he had not gone half a mile before he heard the panther bounding along behind him, giving forth that saw-like cry already described, which seemed even more fearful than the sound of her feet.

"Ah!" he said, "she's in love with me. She never met any one before, and it is most flattering to be her first love."

At that moment, the Frenchman struck one of those treacherous quicksands so dangerous to travellers, and from which it is impossible to escape. Upon finding himself trapped, he cried out in terror, but the panther seized him by the collar, and, quickly leaping backward, she pulled him out of the sandy whirlpool as if by magic.

"Ah, Mignon," cried the soldier, caressing the panther enthusiastically, "we will stick together now, come what will, and no more tricks."

From that time forth, the desert seemed inhabited. It held a being to which the Frenchman could speak, whose ferocity he had quelled,

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yet not knowing the secret of its strange affection for him. However great his desire to remain awake and on his guard, sleep soon overcame him, and held him until morning.

When he awoke, Mignon was gone. He climbed the hill, and saw her in the distance, bounding along in the characteristic manner of animals whose extremely supple vertebral column prevents their running in the usual way. Mignon came up with her mouth covered with blood. She received the caresses of her companion with supreme satisfaction, betrayed by her deep purring. Her eyes were quite softened now as she turned them with even more gentleness than on the preceding evening to the Frenchman; and he spoke to her as if she were a domestic animal.

"Aha, young lady, you really are a fine girl, aren't you, now? Are you not ashamed of yourself? Have you eaten some poor Mau-grabin this morning? Well, never mind; they are only brutes like yourself. But you are not going to eat up the French? If you do, I shall not love you any more."

She played with him just as a puppy plays with its master, allowing him to roll her over, to beat her or pat her in turn; and she even solicited his attention by putting out her paw to him.

Several days passed thus. The character of his associate permitted the Frenchman to admire the sublime beauties of the desert

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without interruption. Here he had experienced hours of trouble as well as hours of rest, had found food and a creature to think about, and the variety of his impressions called forth conflicting emotions. He discovered beauties, unknown to the world at large, in the rising and setting of the sun. He knew the thrill experienced at the whirl produced by the wings of a passing bird—though such visitors were rare. He had watched the beauty of the colours blending in the clouds which at rare intervals passed over his place of refuge. At night, he studied the effect of the moonlight on the sand, as the simoon made undulating, rapidly changing waves. He admired the wonderful brilliancy of the oriental day, yet, after witnessing the terrible sight of a hurricane upon those wide plains where the shifting sands formed dry mists and fatal storms, he hailed with delight the advent of the evening and the refreshing softness of the starlight. Solitude led him to open the storehouses of dreams. He spent whole hours thinking of mere nothings, or comparing his past mode of life with the present. He became very fond of the panther, as his nature demanded some object upon which to lavish his affection.

Whether the influence of the rational mind through the effort of his will had subdued the savage nature of his associate, or whether she found plenty of victims in the desert to satisfy her hunger, she respected the life of the Frenchman, whose suspicions of her waned as she

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of his became tamer. He spent the greater part of the time sleeping, but was obliged to keep a lookout, like a spider watching her web, lest he should allow any opportunity of deliverance to pass by. He utilised his shirt as a flag of distress, hoisting it to the top of a palm-tree stripped of its foliage; but he was obliged to stretch it by means of sticks, for fear the breeze might not be sufficiently strong to unfurl it when a traveller should look in his direction.

During the long hours when hope deserted him, he amused himself with the panther. He learned to understand the inflections of her voice and to interpret the significance of her glance. He studied the curiously designed spots which covered her skin and gave it the appearance of rippling gold. Mignon no longer even growled when he took the end of her tail in his hand to count the black and white rings which surrounded it, and which appeared at a distance like an ornament of precious stones. It gave him pleasure to watch the graceful lines of her form, the snowy whiteness of her belly, and the handsomely shaped head. But he was especially fond of following her motions when she was at play, ever surprised at the ease and youthfulness of her movements. He admired the supple grace with which she bounded, squatted, rolled, crawled along, and suddenly leaped as though attacking an enemy. Yet, no matter how great her speed or how slippery the

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block of granite underfoot, she would stop short at the call of "Mignon."

One day, a great bird was circling about in the sunlight overhead. When the soldier left his panther to examine this new guest, the deserted sultana voiced her displeasure in a low growl.

"The deuce! I believe she is jealous," thought the Frenchman, as he saw her eyes become fixed and glaring. "Certainly, the soul of Virginia might have passed into that body."

The eagle disappeared in the ether, while the soldier stood admiring the crouching figure of the panther. How much grace and youth there was in every line of her body! She was as beautiful as a woman. The light yellow of her fur gradually paled on each side until, on the inner surface of her thighs, it was blended into a dull white, and the sunlight falling full upon her changed the brown rosettes to a golden hue infinitely beautiful in effect.

The man and the panther exchanged a look which seemed to be one of mutual understanding. The coquette trembled with delight when she felt the nails of her lover scratching her head. Her eyes became luminous, and then closed.

"I believe she has a soul, after all," said the soldier, studying the calmness of this queen of the desert, the colour of whose yellow and white

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sands she wore, whose intense heat and solitude she personified.

"Well," she told me, "I have read your plea in favour of animals. Those two seemed to understand each other so well; how did their friendship end?"

"Like all great passions—in a misunderstanding. One suspects the other. One is too proud to ask for an explanation, and the other too stubborn to offer it."

"And to think sometimes a mere look or exclamation at the proper time is sufficient. But finish your story."

"It is exceedingly difficult, but I will tell it as the old warrior told it to me. When he had finished the bottle of champagne, he exclaimed:

"I don't know what I had done, but she turned about as if enraged, and with her sharp teeth scratched my thigh, very slightly to be sure; but I, thinking she was about to devour me, plunged my dagger into her throat. She rolled over with a cry which froze my very heart. In her death-struggle, she turned her eyes toward me. They showed no trace of anger. I would have given the world at that moment, had it been mine, or my cross, which I did not yet possess, to restore her to life. I felt as if I had murdered a human being—a friend. The soldiers who had seen my flag of distress, and had come to my rescue, found me in tears.

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“‘Well,’ he continued, after a moment’s silence, ‘I have fought in Germany, Spain, Russia, and France, and have seen a great deal of the world, but nothing like the desert. Ah! that is beautiful—beyond compare!’

“‘Could you be contented there?’

“‘Oh! that doesn’t follow, young man. I do not always mourn the loss of my group of palms and my panther, but I must think of them at times, and thinking makes me sad. You see, in the desert there is everything and nothing.’

“‘What do you mean?’

“‘Well,’ he answered, with an impatient gesture, ‘God is there—man is **not**.’”

THE SNOWSTORM

BY

ALEXANDER SERGEIVITCH PUSHKIN

TOWARD the end of the year 1811, a memorable period for us, the good Gavril Gavrilovitch R—— was living on his domain of Nenaradova. He was celebrated throughout the district for his hospitality and kind-heartedness. The neighbours were constantly visiting him: some to eat and drink; some to play at five copeck "Boston" with his wife, Praskovia Petrovna; and some to look at their daughter, Maria Gavrilovna, a pale, slender girl of seventeen. She was considered a wealthy match, and many desired her for themselves or for their sons.

Maria Gavrilovna had been brought up on French novels, and, consequently, was in love. The object of her choice was a poor sublieutenant in the army, who was then on leave of absence in his village. It need scarcely be mentioned that the young man returned her passion with equal ardour, and that the parents of his beloved one, observing their mutual inclination, forbade their daughter to think of him, and received him worse than a discharged assessor.

Our lovers corresponded with each other, and, in the little pine wood or near the old chapel,

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daily saw each other alone. There they exchanged vows of eternal love, lamented their cruel fate, and formed various plans. Corresponding and conversing in this way, they arrived quite naturally at the following conclusion:

If we cannot exist without each other, and the will of hard-hearted parents stands in the way of our happiness, why cannot we do without them?

Needless to mention that this happy idea originated in the mind of the young man, and that it was very congenial to the romantic imagination of Maria Gavrilovna.

The winter came and put a stop to their meetings, but their correspondence became all the more active. Vladimir Nikolaievitch in every letter implored her to give herself up to him, to get married secretly, to hide for some time, and then throw themselves at the feet of their parents, who would, without any doubt, be touched at last by the heroic constancy and unhappiness of the lovers, and would infallibly say to them, "Children, come to our arms!"

Maria Gavrilovna hesitated for a long time, and several plans for a flight were rejected. At last, she consented: on the appointed day, she was not to take supper, but was to retire to her room under the pretext of a headache. Her maid was in the plot; they were both to go into the garden by the back stairs, and, behind the garden, they would find ready a sledge, into which they were to get, and then drive straight to the church of Jadrino, a village about five versts from

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Nenaradova, where Vladimir would be waiting for them.

On the eve of the decisive day, Maria Gavrilovna did not sleep the whole night; she packed and tied up her linen and other articles of apparel, wrote a long letter to a sentimental young lady, a friend of hers, and another to her parents. She took leave of them in the most touching terms, urged the invincible strength of passion as an excuse for the step she was taking, and wound up with the assurance that she should consider it the happiest moment of her life when she should be allowed to throw herself at the feet of her dear parents.

After having sealed both letters with a Toula seal, upon which were engraved two flaming hearts with a suitable inscription, she threw herself upon her bed just before daybreak, and dozed off; but, even then, she was constantly being awakened by terrible dreams. First, it seemed to her that, at the very moment when she seated herself in the sledge, in order to go and get married, her father stopped her, dragged her over the snow with fearful rapidity, and threw her into a dark, bottomless abyss, down which she fell headlong with an indescribable sinking of the heart. Then she saw Vladimir lying on the grass, pale and blood-stained. With his dying breath, he implored her in a piercing voice to make haste and marry him. Other wild and fantastic visions floated before her, one after another. At last, she arose, paler than usual, and with a genuine

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headache. Her father and mother observed her uneasiness; their tender solicitude and incessant inquiries, "What is the matter with you, Masha? Are you ill, Masha?" cut her to the heart. She tried to reassure them and to appear cheerful; but in vain.

The evening came. The thought that this was the last day she would pass in the bosom of her family weighed upon her heart. She was more dead than alive. In secret she took leave of everybody, of all the objects that surrounded her.

Supper was served; her heart began to beat violently. In a trembling voice, she declared that she did not want any supper, and then took leave of her father and mother. They kissed her and blessed her as usual, and she could hardly restrain herself from weeping.

On reaching her own room, she threw herself into a chair and burst into tears. Her maid urged her to be calm and to take courage. Everything was ready. In half an hour, Masha would leave forever her parents' house, her room, and her peaceful girlish life.

Out in the courtyard, the snow was falling heavily; the wind howled, the shutters shook and rattled, and everything seemed to her to portend misfortune.

Soon all was quiet in the house: every one was asleep. Masha wrapped herself in a shawl, put on a warm cloak, took her small box in her hand, and went down the back staircase. Her maid

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were beating their breasts like miserable sinners. But these things did not interest me, who had sins of my own to account for.

Soon I reached some who were running toward the fountain. You should have heard their groans. All recognised the comet, and I saw that it had doubled in size.

The crowd stood in the dark, and wailed:

"It is all over! Oh, Lord, it is all over, and we are lost!"

And the women invoked St. Joseph, and St. Christopher, and St. Nicholas—in short, all the saints in the calendar.

At this moment, I passed in review all the sins I had committed since coming to years of discretion, and I felt horrified at myself. I grew cold under my tongue, thinking that we were all going to be burned up, and, as the old beggar Balthazar was standing near me, leaning on his crutch, I embraced him, saying,

"Balthazar, when you rest in Abraham's bosom, you will take pity on me, won't you?"

Then he replied, sobbing:

"I am a great sinner, Monsieur Christian. These thirty years I have deceived the community from my love of idleness; for I am not nearly so lame as I seem."

"And I, Balthazar," lamented I, "I am the greatest sinner in Hunebourg!"

We wept on each other's necks.

You see, that is how people will be at the judgment; kings with boot-blacks, good citizens

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captain of police, a lad of sixteen years of age, who had recently entered the lancers. They not only accepted Vladimir's proposal, but even vowed that they were ready to sacrifice their lives for him. Vladimir embraced them with rapture, and returned home to get everything ready.

It had been dark for some time. He despatched his faithful Tereshka to Nenaradova with his sledge and with detailed instructions, and ordered for himself the small sledge with one horse, and set out alone, without any coachman, for Jadrino, where Maria Gavrilovna ought to arrive in about a couple of hours. He knew the road well, and the journey would only occupy about twenty minutes altogether.

But scarcely had Vladimir issued from the paddock into the open field, when the wind rose, and such a snowstorm came on that he could see nothing. In one minute the road was completely hidden; all surrounding objects disappeared in a thick yellow fog, through which fell the white flakes of snow; earth and sky became confounded. Vladimir found himself in the middle of the field, and tried in vain to find the road again. His horse went on at random, and at every moment kept either stepping into a snow-drift or stumbling into a hole, so that the sledge was constantly being overturned. Vladimir endeavoured not to lose the right direction. But it seemed to him that more than half an hour had already passed, and he had not yet reached the

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Jadrino wood. Another ten minutes elapsed—still no wood was to be seen. Vladimir drove across a field intersected by deep ditches. The snowstorm did not abate; the sky did not become any clearer. The horse began to grow tired, and the perspiration rolled from him in great drops, in spite of the fact that he was constantly being half-buried in the snow.

At last, Vladimir perceived that he was going in the wrong direction. He stopped, began to think, to recollect, and compare, and he felt convinced that he ought to have turned to the right. He turned to the right now. His horse could scarcely move forward. He had now been on the road for more than an hour. Jadrino could not be far off. But on and on he went, and still no end to the field—nothing but snowdrifts and ditches. The sledge was constantly being overturned, and as constantly being set right again. The time was passing: Vladimir began to grow seriously uneasy.

At last, something dark appeared in the distance. Vladimir directed his course toward it. On drawing near, he perceived that it was a wood.

“Thank Heaven!” he thought, “I am not far off now.”

He drove along by the edge of the wood, hoping by-and-by to fall upon the well-known road or to pass round the wood: Jadrino was situated just behind it. He soon found the road, and plunged into the darkness of the wood, now denuded of

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leaves by the winter. The wind could not rage here; the road was smooth; the horse recovered courage, and Vladimir felt reassured.

But he drove on and on, and Jadrino was not to be seen; there was no end to the wood. Vladimir discovered with horror that he had entered an unknown forest. Despair took possession of him. He whipped the horse; the poor animal broke into a trot, but it soon slackened its pace, and in about a quarter of an hour it was scarcely able to drag one leg after the other, in spite of all the exertions of the unfortunate Vladimir.

Gradually the trees began to get sparser, and Vladimir emerged from the forest; but Jadrino was not to be seen. It must now have been about midnight. Tears gushed from his eyes; he drove on at random. Meanwhile, the storm had subsided, the clouds dispersed, and before him lay a level plain covered with a white, undulating carpet. The night was tolerably clear. He saw, not far off, a little village, consisting of four or five houses. Vladimir drove toward it. At the first cottage, he jumped out of the sledge, ran to the window, and began to knock. After a few minutes the wooden shutter was raised and an old man thrust out his grey beard.

"What do you want?"

"Is Jadrino far from here?"

"Is Jadrino far from here?"

"Yes, yes! Is it far?"

"Not far; about ten versts."

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At this reply, Vladimir grasped his hair, and stood motionless like a man condemned to death.

"Where do you come from?" continued the old man.

Vladimir had not the courage to answer the question.

"Listen, old man," said he; "can you procure me horses to take me to Jadrino?"

"How should we have such things as horses?" replied the peasant.

"Can I obtain a guide? I will pay him whatever he pleases."

"Wait," said the old man, closing the shutter; "I will send my son out to you; he will guide you."

Vladimir waited. But a minute had scarcely elapsed when he began knocking again. The shutter was raised, and the beard again appeared.

"What do you want?"

"What about your son?"

"He'll be out presently; he is putting on his boots. Are you cold? Come in and warm yourself."

"Thank you; send your son out quickly."

The door creaked: a lad came out with a cudgel and went on in front, at one time pointing out the road, at another searching for it among the drifted snow.

"What is the time?" Vladimir asked him.

"It will soon be daylight," replied the young peasant. Vladimir spoke not another word.

The cocks were crowing and it was already

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light when they reached Jadrino. The church was closed. Vladimir paid the guide, and drove into the priest's courtyard. His sledge was not there. What news awaited him!

But let us return to the worthy proprietors of Nenaradova, and see what is happening there.

Nothing.

The old people awoke, and went into the parlour, Gavril Gavrilovitch in a night-cap and flannel doublet, Praskovia Petrovna in a wadded dressing-gown. The tea-urn was brought in, and Gavril Gavrilovitch sent a servant to ask Maria Gavrilovna how she was and how she had passed the night. The servant returned, saying that the young lady had not slept very well, but that she felt better now, and that she would come down presently into the parlour. And, indeed, the door opened, and Maria Gavrilovna entered the room, and wished her father and mother good morning.

"How is your head, Masha?" asked Gavril Gavrilovitch.

"Better, papa," replied Masha.

"Very likely you inhaled the fumes from the charcoal yesterday," said Praskovia Petrovna.

"Very likely, mamma," replied Masha.

The day passed happily enough, but in the night Masha was taken ill. A doctor was sent for from the town. He arrived in the evening, and found the sick girl delirious. A violent fever ensued, and for two weeks the poor patient hovered on the brink of the grave.

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Nobody in the house knew anything about her flight. The letters written by her the evening before had been burnt; and her maid, dreading the wrath of her master, had not whispered a word about it to anybody. The priest, the retired cornet, the moustached surveyor, and the little lancer were discreet, and not without reason. Tereshka, the coachman, never uttered one word too much about it, even when he was drunk. Thus the secret was kept by more than half-a-dozen conspirators.

But Maria Gavrilovna herself divulged her secret during her delirious ravings. But her words were so disconnected that her mother, who never left her bedside, could understand from them only that her daughter was deeply in love with Vladimir Nikolaievitch, and that, probably, love was the cause of her illness. She consulted her husband and some of her neighbours, and at last it was unanimously decided that such was evidently Maria Gavrilovna's fate, that a woman cannot ride away from the man who is destined to be her husband, that poverty is not a crime, that one does not marry wealth, but a man, etc. Moral proverbs are wonderfully useful in those cases where we can invent little in our own justification.

In the meantime, the young lady began to recover. Vladimir had not been seen for a long time in the house of Gavril Gavrilovitch. He was afraid of the usual reception. It was resolved to send and announce to him an unex-

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pected piece of good news: the consent of Maria's parents to his marriage with their daughter. But what was the astonishment of the proprietor of Nenaradova, when, in reply to their invitation, they received from him a half-insane letter. He informed them that he would never set foot in their house again, and begged them to forget an unhappy creature whose only hope was in death. A few days afterward they heard that Vladimir had joined the army again. This was in the year 1812.

For a long time, they did not dare to announce this to Masha, who was now convalescent. She never mentioned the name of Vladimir. Some months afterward, finding his name in the list of those who had distinguished themselves and been severely wounded at Borodino, she fainted away, and it was feared that she would have another attack of fever. But, Heaven be thanked! the fainting fit had no serious consequences.

Another misfortune fell upon her: Gavril Gavrilovitch died, leaving her the heiress to all his property. But the inheritance did not console her; she shared sincerely the grief of poor Praskovia Petrovna, vowing that she would never leave her. They both quitted Nenaradova, the scene of so many sad recollections, and went to live on another estate.

Suitors crowded round the young and wealthy heiress, but she gave not the slightest hope to any of them. Her mother sometimes exhorted her to make a choice; but Maria Gavrilovna shook

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her head, and became pensive. Vladimir no longer existed: he had died in Moscow on the eve of the entry of the French. His memory seemed to be held sacred by Masha; at least, she treasured up everything that could remind her of him—books that he had once read, his drawings, his notes and verses of poetry that he had copied out for her. The neighbours, hearing of all this, were astonished at her constancy, and awaited with curiosity the hero who should at last triumph over the melancholy fidelity of this virgin Artemisia.

Meanwhile, the war had ended gloriously. Our regiments returned from abroad, and the people went out to meet them. The bands played the conquering song, "*Vive Henri-Quatre*," Tyrolese waltzes, and airs from "*Joconde*." Officers, who had set out for the war almost mere lads, returned grown men, with martial air, and breasts decorated with crosses. The soldiers chatted gayly among themselves, constantly mingling French and German words in their speech. Time never to be forgotten! Time of glory and enthusiasm! How throbbed the Russian heart at the word "Fatherland!" How sweet were the tears of meeting! With what unanimity did we commingle feelings of national pride with love for the Czar! And for him—what a moment!

The women, the Russian women, were then incomparable. Their usual coldness disappeared. Their enthusiasm was truly intoxicating,

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when, welcoming the conquerors, they cried "Hurrah!"

What officer of that time does not confess that, to the Russian women, he was indebted for his best and most precious reward?

At this brilliant period, Maria Gavrilôvna was living with her mother in the province of — and did not see how both capitals celebrated the return of the troops. But, in the districts and villages, the general enthusiasm was, if possible, even still greater. The appearance of an officer in those places was for him a veritable triumph, and the lover in a plain coat felt very ill at ease in his vicinity.

We have already said that, in spite of her coldness, Maria Gavrilovna was, as before, surrounded by suitors. But all had to retire into the background when the wounded Colonel Bourmin of the hussars, with the order of St. George in his button-hole, and with an "interesting pallor," as the young ladies of the neighbourhood observed, appeared at the castle. He was about twenty-six years of age. He had obtained leave of absence to visit his estate, which was contiguous to that of Maria Gavrilovna. Maria bestowed special attention upon him. In his presence, her habitual pensiveness disappeared. It cannot be said that she coquetted with him, but a poet, observing her behaviour, would have said:

"Se amor non è, che dunque?"

Bourmin was indeed a very charming young

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man. He possessed that spirit which is eminently pleasing to women: a spirit of decorum and observation, without any pretensions, and yet not without a slight tendency toward careless satire. His behaviour toward Maria Gavrilovna was simple and frank, but whatever she said or did, his soul and eyes followed her. He seemed to be of a quiet and modest disposition, though report said that he had once been a terrible rake but this did not injure him in the opinion of Maria Gavrilovna, who—like all young ladies in general—excused with pleasure follies that gave indication of boldness and ardour of temperament.

But more than everything else—more than his tenderness, more than his agreeable conversation, more than his interesting pallor, more than his arm in a sling—the silence of the young hussar excited her curiosity and imagination. She could not but confess that he pleased her very much; probably he, too, with his perception and experience, had already observed that she made a distinction between him and others; how was it then that she had not yet seen him at her feet or heard his declaration? What restrained him? Was it timidity, inseparable from true love, or pride, or the coquetry of a crafty wooer? It was an enigma to her. After long reflection, she came to the conclusion that timidity alone was the cause of it, and she resolved to encourage him by greater attention and, if circumstances should render it necessary, even by an exhibition of

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tenderness. She prepared a most unexpected *dénouement*, and waited with impatience for the moment of the romantic explanation. A secret of whatever nature it may be always presses heavily upon the female heart. Her stratagem had the desired success; at least, Bourmin fell into such a reverie, and his black eyes rested with such fire upon her, that the decisive moment seemed close at hand. The neighbours spoke about the marriage as if it were a matter already decided upon, and good Praskovia Petrovna rejoiced that her daughter had at last found a lover worthy of her.

On one occasion, the old lady was sitting alone in the parlour, amusing herself with a pack of cards, when Bourmin entered the room, and immediately inquired for Maria Gavrilovna.

"She is in the garden," replied the old lady; "go out to her, and I will wait here for you."

Bourmin went, and the old lady made the sign of the cross and thought, "Perhaps the business will be settled to-day!"

Bourmin found Maria Gavrilovna near the pond, under a willow tree, with a book in her hands, and in white dress—a veritable heroine of romance. After the first few questions and observations, Maria Gavrilovna purposely allowed the conversation to drop, thereby increasing their mutual embarrassment, from which there was no possible way of escape except only by a sudden and decisive declaration.

And this is what happened: Bourmin, feeling

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the difficulty of his position, declared that he had long sought for an opportunity to open his heart to her, and requested a moment's attention. Maria Gavrilovna closed her book and cast down her eyes, as a sign of compliance with his request.

"I love you," said Bourmin : "I love you passionately."

Maria Gavrilovna blushed, and lowered her head still more. "I have acted imprudently in accustoming myself to the sweet pleasure of seeing and hearing you daily,"—Maria Gavrilovna recalled to mind the first letter of St. Preux—"but it is now too late to resist my fate; the remembrance of you, your dear incomparable image, will henceforth be the torment and the consolation of my life, but there still remains a grave duty for me to perform—to reveal to you a terrible secret which will place between us an insurmountable barrier."

"That barrier has always existed," interrupted Maria Gavrilovna hastily: "I could never be your wife."

"I know," replied he calmly, "I know that you once loved, but death and three years of mourning—— Dear, kind Maria Gavrilovna, do not try to deprive me of my last consolation: the thought that you would have consented to make me happy if——"

"Don't speak, for Heaven's sake, don't speak. You torture me."

"Yes, I know, I feel that you would have been

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mine, but—I am the most miserable creature under the sun—I am already married!”

Maria Gavrilovna looked at him in astonishment.

“I am already married,” continued Bourmin; “I have been married four years, but I do not know who is my wife, or where she is, or whether I shall ever see her again!”

“What do you say?” exclaimed Maria Gavrilovna. “How very strange! Continue: I will relate to you afterward—— But continue, I beg of you.”

“At the beginning of the year 1812,” said Bourmin, “I was hastening to Vilna, where my regiment was stationed. Arriving late one evening at one of the post-stations, I ordered the horses to be got ready as quickly as possible, when suddenly a terrible snowstorm came on, and the postmaster and drivers advised me to wait till it had passed over. I followed their advice, but an unaccountable uneasiness took possession of me: it seemed as if some one were pushing me forward. Meanwhile, the snowstorm did not subside; I could endure it no longer, and again ordering out the horses, I started off in the midst of the storm. The driver conceived the idea of following the course of the river, which would shorten our journey by three versts. The banks were covered with snow: the driver drove past the place where we should have come out upon the road, and so we found ourselves in an unknown part of the country.

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The storm did not cease; I saw a light in the distance, and I ordered the driver to proceed toward it. We reached a village; in the wooden church, there was a light. The church was open. Outside the railings stood several sledges, and people were passing in and out through the porch.

"This way! this way!" cried several voices.

"I ordered the driver to proceed.

"In the name of Heaven, where have you been loitering?" said somebody to me. "The bride has fainted away; the pope does not know what to do, and we were just getting ready to go back. Get out as quickly as you can."

"I got out of the sledge without saying a word, and went into the church, which was feebly lit up by two or three tapers. A young girl was sitting on a bench in a dark corner of the church; another girl was rubbing her temples.

"Thank God!" said the latter, 'you have come at last. You have almost killed the young lady.'

"The old priest advanced toward me, and said,

"Do you wish me to begin?"

"Begin, begin, father," replied I, absently.

"The young girl was raised up. She seemed to me not at all bad-looking. Impelled by an incomprehensible, unpardonable levity, I placed myself by her side in front of the pulpit; the priest hurried on; three men and a chambermaid supported the bride, and occupied themselves only with her. We were married.

"Kiss each other!" said the witness to us.

"My wife turned her pale face toward me. I

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was about to kiss her, when she exclaimed: 'Oh! it is not he! it is not he!' and fell senseless.

"The witnesses gazed at me in alarm. I turned round, and left the church without the least hindrance, flung myself into the *kibitka*, and cried, 'Drive off!'"

"My God!" exclaimed Maria Gavrilovna. "And you do not know what became of your poor wife?"

"I do not know," replied Bourmin; "neither do I know the name of the village where I was married, nor the post-station where I set out from. At that time, I attached so little importance to my wicked prank that, on leaving the church, I fell asleep, and did not awake till the next morning, after reaching the third station. The servant who was then with me died during the campaign, so that I have no hope of ever discovering the woman upon whom I played such a cruel joke, and who is now so cruelly avenged."

"My God! my God!" cried Maria Gavrilovna, seizing him by the hand: "then it was you! And you do not recognise me?"

Bourmin turned pale—and threw himself at her feet.



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